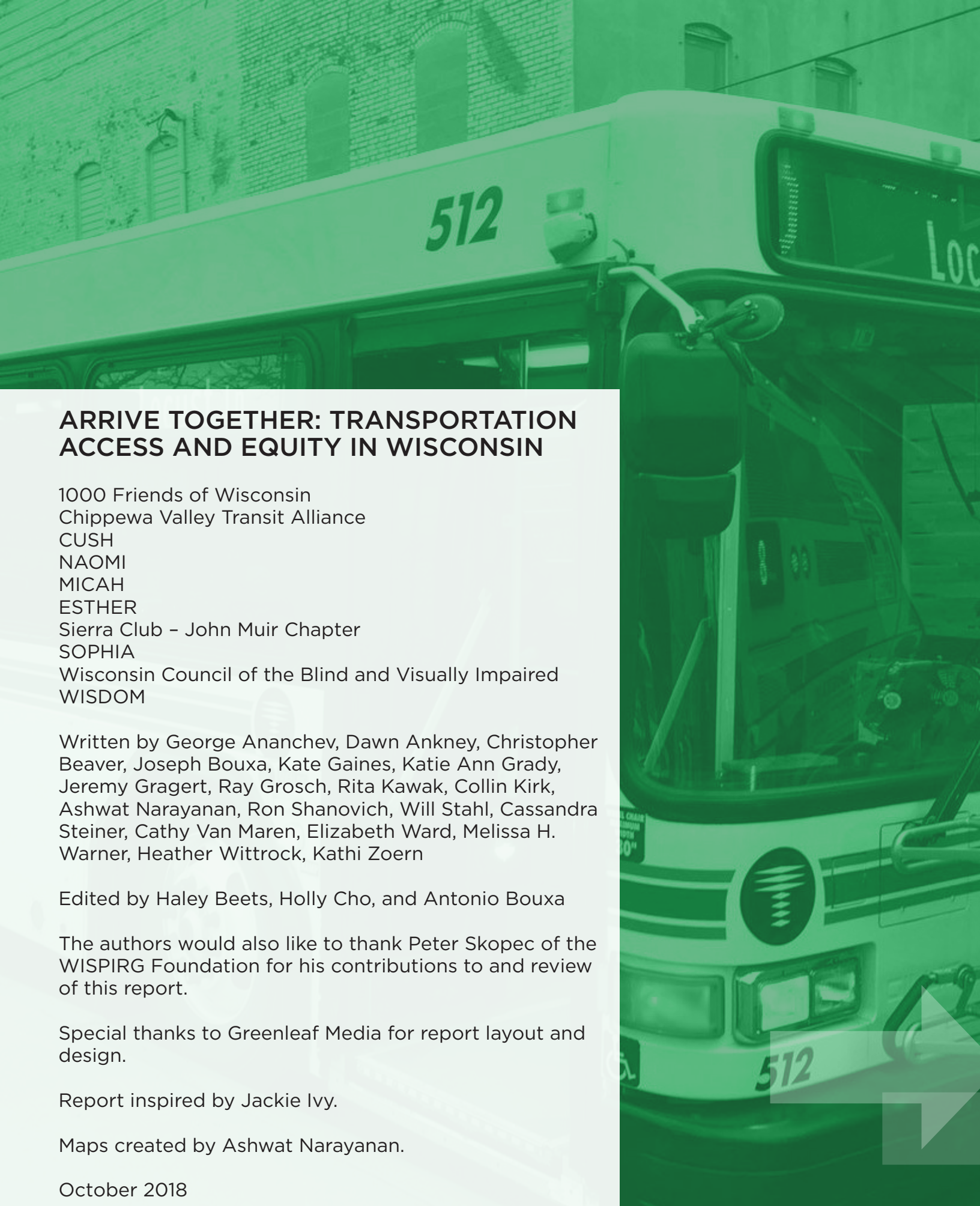
ARRIVE TOGETHER:

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND EQUITY IN WISCONSIN

OCTOBER 2018

1000 Friends of Wisconsin | Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance | CUSH | NAOMI | MICAH | ESTHER
Sierra Club–John Muir Chapter | SOPHIA | Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired | WISDOM



ARRIVE TOGETHER: TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND EQUITY IN WISCONSIN

1000 Friends of Wisconsin
Chippewa Valley Transit Alliance
CUSH
NAOMI
MICAH
ESTHER
Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter
SOPHIA
Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired
WISDOM

Written by George Ananchev, Dawn Ankney, Christopher Beaver, Joseph Bouxa, Kate Gaines, Katie Ann Grady, Jeremy Gragert, Ray Grosch, Rita Kawak, Collin Kirk, Ashwat Narayanan, Ron Shanovich, Will Stahl, Cassandra Steiner, Cathy Van Maren, Elizabeth Ward, Melissa H. Warner, Heather Wittrock, Kathi Zoern

Edited by Haley Beets, Holly Cho, and Antonio Bouxa

The authors would also like to thank Peter Skopec of the WISPIRG Foundation for his contributions to and review of this report.

Special thanks to Greenleaf Media for report layout and design.

Report inspired by Jackie Ivy.

Maps created by Ashwat Narayanan.

October 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 4

Terms of Reference and Procedure 5

Defining Common Terms

Report Procedure

Introduction 7

Transportation Funding Overview 12

Transit System Profiles: Understanding Public Transportation in Wisconsin.

Eau Claire 17

Fox Cities 23

Hayward 29

La Crosse 33

Madison Metropolitan Area 41

Milwaukee County 49

Racine 57

Waukesha 61

Wausau 67

Conclusion and Recommendations 73

References 74

ARRIVE TOGETHER:

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND EQUITY IN WISCONSIN

Photography by Elizabeth Ward

"Transit is the key for work. I have my dream job now, but couldn't get there if not for the bus."

– David, Waukesha
(Story collected by interfaith group SOPHIA)[1]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin's transportation system is not working for a growing number of people around the state. Wisconsin's leaders' decades-long focus on driving infrastructure has been at the expense of investments in public transportation, walking infrastructure, and biking infrastructure. The expansion of the state's road and highway network, combined with policies that encourage suburban sprawl, has produced a transportation system that leaves Wisconsinites who aren't able to drive, or can't afford to drive, cut off from the places that matter.

Today, many seniors, people with disabilities, low-to-middle-income Wisconsinites, and young people are unable to reach school, work, the grocery store, or the doctor's office without access to a car. Lack of access to transportation disproportionately impacts Communities of Color in Wisconsin, exacerbating problems of residential segregation and limiting upward economic mobility.

The following report examines the effectiveness and equitability of transportation in nine cities, towns and major metropolitan regions across Wisconsin. This examination is a culmination of 2010 U.S. Census data, figures provided by Wisconsin 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 Transportation Authorities (RTAs) are making it increasingly difficult for local public transportation systems statewide to provide mobility for all.

In addition to the need for greater and more stable funding for non-driving modes of transportation, commonly identified needs for improvement in the communities profiled include:

- **Expanding the frequency of bus/public transit runs.**
- **Extending the hours of operation of public transportation systems, particularly to better accommodate irregular work shifts and weekend travel needs.**
- **Placing bus/transit stops closer to major employment centers, hospitals, schools, and other points of interest and building bus stops closer to the public rights of way, so that transit stops on local streets are proximate to the entrances of those facilities.**
- **Improving connectivity between outlying/rural areas and towns and cities.**

Given the crucial economic and societal roles that public transit plays in Wisconsin communities, federal, state and local leaders should consider the broad benefits of adequate investment in public transportation. Wisconsin's transportation system could also benefit from closer collaboration between decision-makers and local planning bodies, which have, in many cases, already identified solutions to improve transit systems to better serve their communities.

Photography by Jeremy Gragert

TERMS OF REFERENCE AND PROCEDURE

Defining Common Terms

Equity: Throughout this report, equity should be understood as "proportionate impacts of a policy or policy outcome on one community or group of people to another."

Public Transportation: In the context of this report, "public transportation" is defined as any mode of transportation (including but not limited to buses, shuttles, shared fare taxis, and trains) that is available for public use without private arrangement. Throughout the report, "transit" and "public transportation" are used interchangeably.

Paratransit: A form of public transportation that provides supplemental transport beyond fixed bus routes for individuals with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route buses or personal vehicles.

Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs): Arrangements in which regions (counties, multi-county areas, metropolitan regions, etc.) work together to establish a regional public transportation system and meet other local transportation needs. This is often connected to a funding mechanism for that region, such as a sales tax; local governments can use the revenue generated to supplement federal and state funding for public transportation, road and bridge repairs, walking and biking infrastructure, and other projects. Under Wisconsin law, the establishment of a Regional Transportation Authority currently requires approval by the state legislature. State legislative leadership has strongly opposed RTAs in recent years; Wisconsin has no RTAs as a result.[4]

Seniors: In the context of this report, "seniors" refers to those aged 65 and older. Wisconsin has a growing population of seniors and estimates are that by 2040, most counties in Wisconsin will see a large increase in the percentage of their populations that are made up of seniors.[5]

Report Procedure

This report was written by 19 different authors who compiled their data from the 2010 census, more recent demographic samples, government bodies and transit systems. Primary data, including the personal stories, were compiled through interviews with transit riders and transit system managers. Interviews were conducted by various nonprofit organizations including the Sierra Club – John Muir Chapter, the interfaith social justice organization WISDOM and WISDOM's local affiliates CUSH, NAOMI, MICAH, SOPHIA and ESTHER. The transit system maps used throughout this report were created by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. The majority of transit system profiles were written by members of the communities that are highlighted and were reviewed by staff at those transit systems.

Photography by Collin Kirk

INTRODUCTION

Public Transportation: A Growing Need

Mobility is a critical component of a fulfilling life; without reliable transportation, access to work, the grocery store, health care, places of worship, and social opportunities can be impossible. For those who drive personal vehicles, mobility may be taken for granted. However, a significant number of residents in Wisconsin are non-drivers. The following section outlines major categories of non-drivers:

Seniors

A 2015 statement from the Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR) states, "[a]dults over 60 years old make up about 22% of the population in WI. In some districts, this number is as high as 30-40%. One in five Wisconsin residents aged 65 and older does not drive and will be seeking transportation options. In Wisconsin, 53% of non-drivers over the age of 65 stay isolated in their homes."[6] Since that statement was published, the number of Wisconsin residents over the age of 65 has increased. Projections indicate that that trend will continue, as the population of seniors is forecast to double by 2040 in most Wisconsin counties.[7] Effective public transportation will continue to increase in importance for seniors who wish to remain independent without personal vehicles.

People with Disabilities

In addition to Wisconsin's aging population, some Wisconsinites are unable to drive due to disability. Visual impairments, epilepsy and limited mobility are just a few examples of health conditions that may impact one's ability to drive.[8] More than 8 percent of Wisconsin residents ages 18-64, and 33.1 percent of those ages 65 or older, have one or more disabilities.[9] Age or disability can contribute to social isolation and often present obstacles to reaching healthcare appointments, school, work, the grocery store and more.

Individuals with disabilities, regardless of age, face many transportation challenges. Denise Jess, a nonprofit professional in Madison and a person with a visual impairment, explains some of her experiences with transit access:

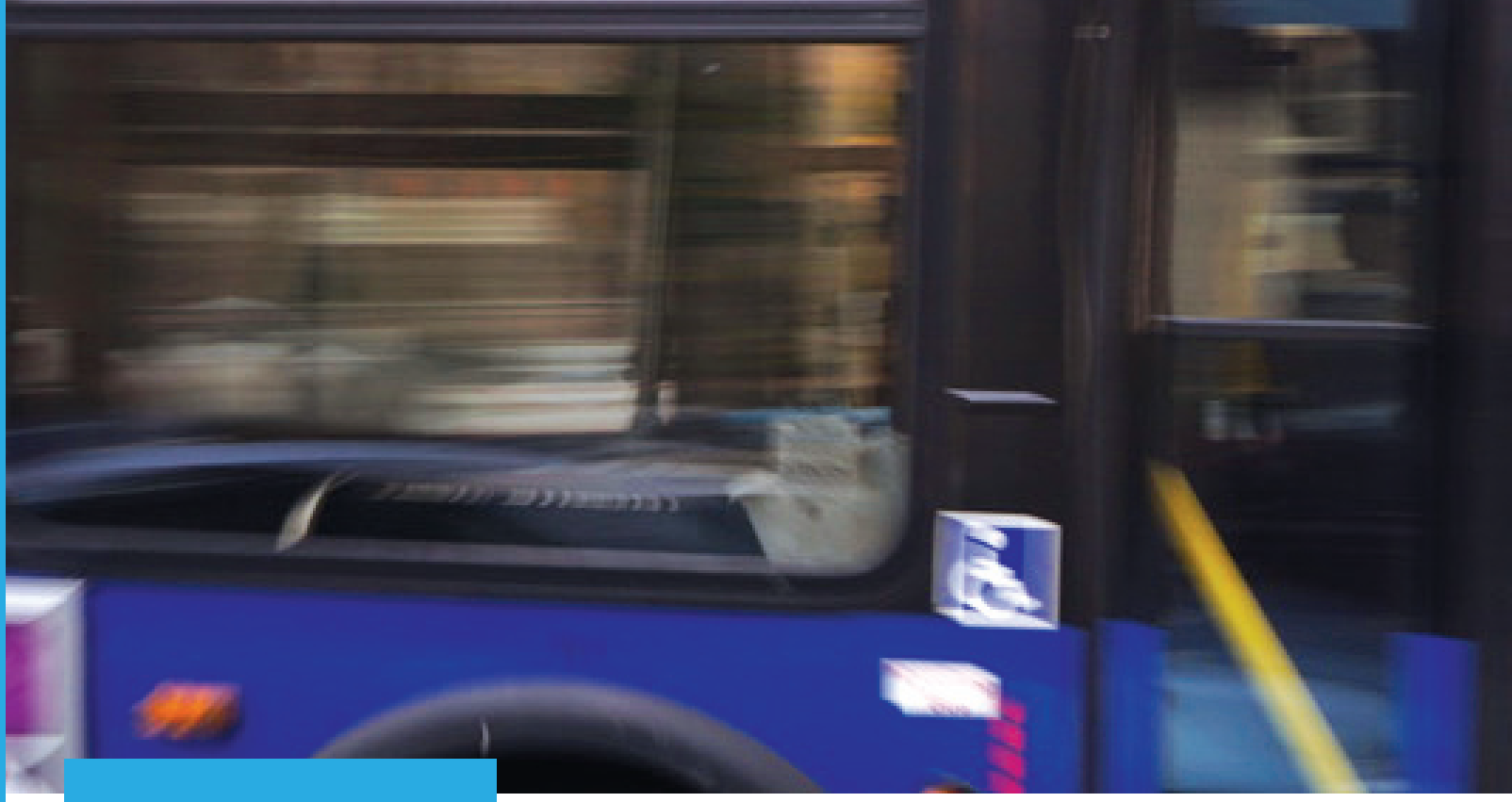
"In deciding where in the city I was going to live, transportation access, both bus and pedestrian, was a key deciding factor in where we bought our home… this neighborhood is an expensive one to live in, so the economic cost is a big trade-off. So while I have a lot of freedom and access to move about as I want to because of the buses, we pay a huge amount of property tax, and we don't have really inexpensive grocery stores and things like that in the downtown area. The cost of living is so much higher. I think that's a consequence for people with disabilities. You either end up living in a lower economic area and trying to figure out transportation, or if you live where the transportation might be better, but your cost of living is higher" (story collected by Sierra Club).

In addition to the economic trade-off Denise faced, she also describes the anxiety that can accompany navigating day-to-day transportation. For those who are visually impaired, audio cues on buses are necessary. If the system is down or a stop is announced too late, it can lead to a missed stop

Photography by Elizabeth Ward

"The bus helps me get around. As a college student with a part-time job and no car, it helps a lot."

– Josh, Appleton
(Story collected by interfaith group ESTHER)[2]



"What if the cab is running late or my ride doesn't show up? What's my plan B, C and D? So just an enormous amount of human energy and potential gets put into that daily management of that stuff, and I think that's really striking."

– Denise Jess, Madison
(Story collected by Sierra Club)

or a negative interaction with a bus driver who may be unaware of the rider's visual impairment. People who are unable to drive have to constantly plan ahead. Denise describes her daily thought process:

"What if the cab is running late or my ride doesn't show up? What's my plan B, C and D? So just an enormous amount of human energy and potential gets put into that daily management of that stuff, and I think that's really striking, you know? How much mental and emotional, let alone physical and economic, toll that takes on people."

The bus system nonetheless provides a freedom of mobility that would otherwise be unavailable to people with disabilities. When bus routes are changed or cut due to budget decreases, people with disabilities are among those directly impacted.[10]

People with Low or Fixed Incomes

Economic barriers also create transportation challenges. Between purchasing a car and paying for gas, maintenance, insurance and registration, the average American spends 19 percent of every dollar on transportation. However, according to Robert Bullard, as much as 40 percent of the income of the poorest residents in the United States goes toward transportation.[11]

In Wisconsin, economic disparities and racial disparities are deeply connected; African American households in the state are more than three times as likely to be unemployed, five times as likely to live in poverty, and on average earn an income $27,277 lower than their white counterparts.[12] Therefore, low income Wisconsinites, who are often People of Color, face a significant financial barrier to owning a car or to repairing their vehicle if it breaks down. Indeed, research has found that "possession of a driver's license and a car was a stronger predictor of leaving public assistance than even a high school diploma."[13]

Some individuals who are unable to drive or afford a car are left without dependable transportation options, while others who live in cities with public transit options are not adequately served due to limitations of hours, number of routes or frequency of stops. Even where public transportation is available, limitations in service can disproportionately impact those who work inconsistent schedules or second and third shifts.

In *Highway Robbery*, Bullard writes that "[t]ransportation remains a major stumbling block for many to achieve self-sufficiency. It boils down to 'no transportation, no job.'" In

Photography by David Loken

order to improve the quality of life for Wisconsin's residents and get more people to work, connections to jobs through reliable transportation are essential.[14]

Types of Inequity in the Transportation Sector

The inequities in Wisconsin's transportation sector are easy to identify. First, the vast majority of Wisconsin's transportation budget supports infrastructure - from interstates to major highways and local roads - that primarily benefits drivers. Because a growing portion of Wisconsin's transportation budget is subsidized through General Purpose Revenue, debt, or local tax revenue rather than paid for through user fees like the gas tax, non-drivers bear a part of this financial burden without seeing their share of the returns.[15]

Additionally, transit systems themselves are inequitable when the routes benefit wealthier parts of a service area over lower income areas that may have a higher percent of transit-reliant individuals. As a result, those who are already disadvantaged - whether due to age, ability or income - are further burdened by lack of transportation that connects them to their jobs, healthcare, and other essential locations.

Furthermore, low-income communities are impacted by degraded air quality due to the proximity of highways. This poor air quality negatively impacts public health and correlates with higher rates of cancer and asthma.[16] Fifty percent of African Americans and 60 percent of Latinx people live in metropolitan areas that fail to meet national air quality standards for more than one pollutant.[17]

Many public transportation agencies in Wisconsin are struggling to best serve their communities on shoestring budgets. Meanwhile, the state has chosen in recent decades to spend billions of dollars to add lanes to highways, with questionable justifications, that will benefit only drivers with personal vehicles.[18] If Wisconsin wants to better serve its seniors, people with disabilities, or middle- and low-income households, state leaders must reassess Wisconsin's transportation priorities.

"I am blind and live in a city that only has a shared-ride taxi. I am a retired high school teacher, and I would like to continue working as a substitute and find it impossible to get to schools because of lack of transportation. This restricts my ability to be gainfully employed. I know many others that are in the same situation. This causes them to live near poverty levels. There are many people that would love to be self-sufficient and less dependent on government programs that are barely sustaining them at present.

– Frank, Sun Prairie

(Story collected by Sierra Club)[3]

A History of Transportation and Social Inequity

Transportation policy has a long historical connection to social inequity. The 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott was a protest against segregated bus services, and despite the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson* that banned segregated railroad cars, some post-World War II transportation policies have had inequitable impacts on land use patterns, as well as on the social and economic conditions of urban areas.[19]

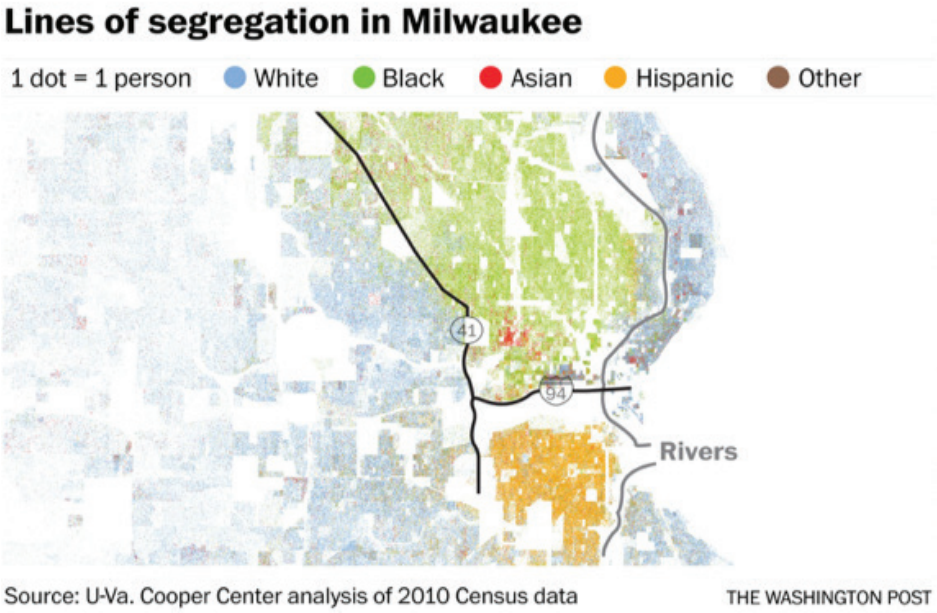
Highway construction, land use policies that result in slum clearance, and urban renewal activities have displaced and physically divided communities. For example, the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway in the 1950s in New York City displaced 60,000 people. The South Bronx lost 600,000 manufacturing jobs, per capita income dropped to one-half the city average, and youth unemployment rose to 60 percent.[20]

Similarly, the construction of I-43 and I-94 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin resulted in the clearance of nearby neighborhoods and solidified racial and ethnic segregation in the city.[21]

After the civil unrest in Los Angeles, Detroit, Newark and other cities in the mid- to late-1960s, links between transportation and social injustice were more clearly identified.[22] The Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots in 1965 identified transportation policy as one of the causes of the unrest, for its role in failing to provide adequate access to jobs and other essential locations, such as health care facilities. The National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968 report on the causes and effects of the civil unrest in U.S. cities included in its recommendations enhancing employment opportunities for central-city residents by improving transportation links between poor urban neighborhoods and new job locations in the suburbs.[23] However, during the 1970s and 1980s, federal highway construction activities continued to displace urban residents and destroy urban communities, including in Milwaukee.[24]

Since, there are a number of federal laws, programs, and guidelines that have been created to address or analyze potential civil rights impacts, like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. In 1994, President Clinton issued an executive order mandating that the achievement of environmental justice be made part of every federal agency's mission and directed federal agencies to develop a strategy that "identifies and addresses disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations."[25]

Guidance for transportation planning agencies has generally been issued by the Federal Transit Authority. Today, recipients of federal funding must demonstrate compliance with the Civil Rights Act and other laws and guidance designed to mitigate adverse impacts on protected populations, including low-income and transit-dependent persons and racial minorities.[26]



Photography by David Loken

The Fight for Transportation Equity Continues

Despite the positive strides through various policies and government agencies, there remains inequity in the transportation sector. Recent events in Milwaukee, one of the most racially segregated metropolitan areas in the country, offer a prime example of how inequitable transportation policy continues to harm vulnerable populations today.

In 2012, the Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied For Hope (MICAH) and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin filed suit in U.S. District Court contending that government agencies failed to prepare an adequate Environmental Impact Statement (a formal analysis of the projects' environmental and environmental justice impacts, also known as an EIS) before proceeding with the Zoo Interchange Project in the Milwaukee metropolitan area.[27] The plaintiffs argued that, in designing this massive highway reconstruction and expansion project, the government had failed to include some form of public transportation that would help transit-dependent residents access jobs and services in Waukesha County, on the western edge of the project area.

The court ruled that the EIS was likely deficient because it did not address the cumulative impact of continuing to expand highway capacity in the region while transit capacity declined. Specifically, the court found that to correct this deficiency, the agencies "must examine the potential social and economic impact on the transit-dependent of continuing to expand highway capacity in the region while transit capacity declines. If after conducting this examination the agencies determine that their continuing to expand highway capacity while transit capacity declines will have negative effects, the agencies must consider identifying and assessing an alternative to the project that might avoid, minimize or mitigate those negative effects."[28]

On May 19, 2014, The Wisconsin Department of Transportation agreed to pay $11.5 million over four years for improving bus services to Milwaukee suburbs with job opportunities.[29] In 2017, MICAH and other plaintiffs including Sierra Club and NAACP filed a similar complaint against plans to expand the I-94 East-West interstate in Milwaukee without adding a transit component. Fortunately, due to a lack of funding, and following objections from the community and the threat of the lawsuit, the U.S. Department of Transportation formally rescinded the approval of the I-94 East-West expansion project in October 2017. This signals a step toward reassessing transportation priorities in Wisconsin, though transit funding remains threatened.

Photography by Collin Kirk

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING OVERVIEW

Federal Highway Trust Fund

The primary source of revenue for the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) is federal motor fuel taxes, which make up about 90 percent of fund revenue.[30] A load capacity tax on tires, a tax on truck and tractor sales, and an annual fee on heavy use vehicles generate additional revenue.[31] Due to declining fuel sales growth the HTF runs an annual deficit and is projected to run out by 2021[32]. Congress has addressed the shortfall by transferring General Fund revenues to the HTF. Approximately 39 percent of HTF revenues are placed in a separate transit assistance account.[33]

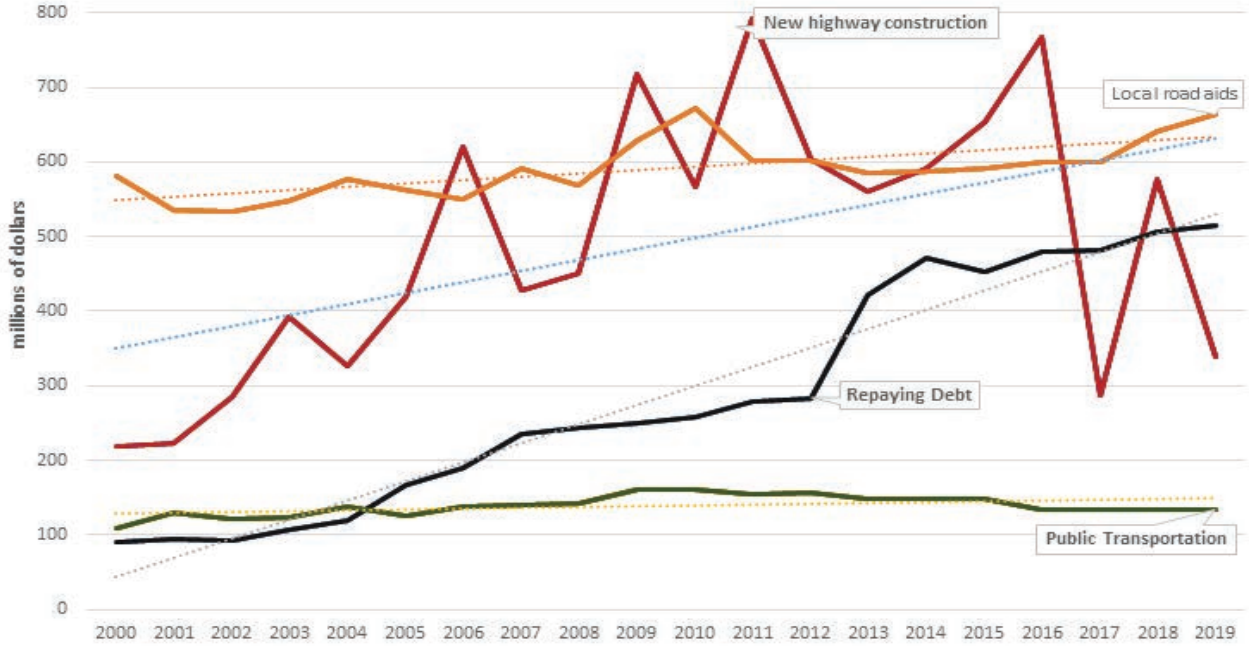
The federal government typically does not invest directly in transportation infrastructure, but rather distributes funding as grants to state and local governments. About 93 percent are formula grants based on factors intended to quantify a state's or locality's needs. Federal highway funding formulas include factors such as a state's aggregate vehicle miles traveled, lane miles, and the amount of federal gas and vehicle taxes collected. Federal transit formulas are based on population, population density, bus passenger miles and other similar variables.[34] Federal formulas also mandate that a certain percentage of state residents' contributions to the HTF from federal gas and vehicle taxes be returned to the states. The remaining federal funding is distributed through competitive and nonformula grants. Competitive grants are conditioned on approval by the U.S. Department of Transportation and both competitive funds and formula grants are subject to certain requirements.

Generally, state and local governments must match a portion of federal funding with their own funding, usually providing a 10 percent match for interstate funding, a 20 percent match for other roads and a minimum of 20 percent match for transit, with selection priority given for matches of up to 50 percent.[35] State and local grant recipients are also subject to federal rules and laws that govern federally funded projects. These include requirements to develop regional transportation plans, paying workers the local prevailing wage, conducting environmental reviews, and purchasing domestic equipment and construction materials.

Wisconsin Transportation Funding

Transportation infrastructure in Wisconsin is paid for from the segregated transportation fund, which is a separate account from other

WisDOT Modal Funding Trends 2000-2019



general revenues collected by the state. A constitutional amendment passed in 2014 prevents money in this fund from being spent on non-transportation related uses. The segregated fund pays for all transportation modes in the state including highways, county and local roads, public transit, and railroads. It also funds the Department of Motor Vehicles and the State Patrol.

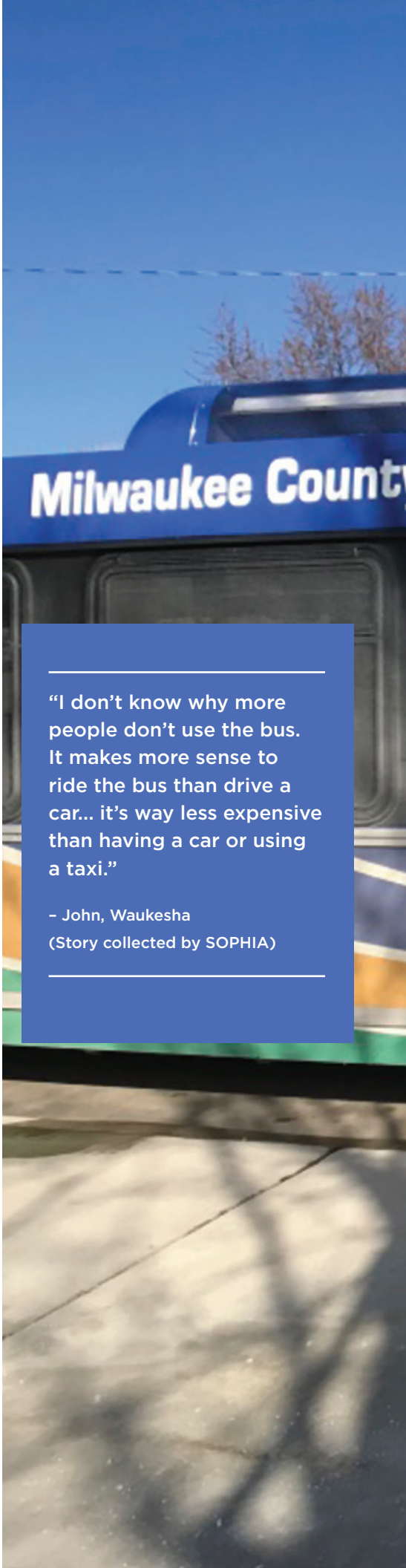
Revenue into the transportation fund comes from several sources, including a state tax on gasoline purchases (referred to as the gas tax). Wisconsin's gas tax is set at 30.9 cents per gallon of gasoline and is the seventh highest rate amongst U.S. states.[36] While often described as a pay-for-use fee — which assumes that those using the state's transportation infrastructure are the ones paying for it — the tax only contributes about 56 percent of total transportation fund revenue. Federal funds account for about 24 percent through a national levy on gasoline purchases at 18.4 cents per gallon. The remainder of the fund is subsidized by general purpose revenues, payments from local governments and borrowing.[37]

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) administers all transportation fund revenue, as authorized by the state legislature. The majority of transportation infrastructure spending is on state highways—approximately $1.7 billion in 2015 out of a total of $3.1 billion. Funding for local infrastructure through two programs known as the General Transportation Aids and Local Road and Bridge Assistance totaled about $590 million. State funding for public transit accounted for less than 5 percent of the total budget at $144.5 million in the same year.[38]

Over the last decade, the state's transportation funding priorities have increasingly skewed towards highway construction and their subsequent maintenance. Funding for new highway construction has gone up by 67 percent between 2000 and 2015. At the same time, local transportation funding increased by just one percent.

In 2011, the Legislature reduced transit operating assistance by 10 percent, repealed regional transit authorities and eliminated a $100 million capital bonding program.[39] The DOT did not request any increase in transit assistance in it's 2013-15 or 2016-18 biennial budget requests, indicating that transit funding is not a departmental priority. Additionally, in the 2016-18 biennial budget, the state of Wisconsin added a supplemental and annual registration fee of $100 for alternate-fuel powered vehicles, which could impact transit agencies that purchase zero emission buses in the future.

Funding for servicing debt taken on for new highway construction has increased by a staggering 420 percent from 2000 to 2015. For those unable to drive, the financial prioritization of highways over transit has had a substantial impact on their quality of life, which is further examined in the transit system profiles in this report.[40]



> "I don't know why more people don't use the bus. It makes more sense to ride the bus than drive a car... it's way less expensive than having a car or using a taxi."
>
> – John, Waukesha
> (Story collected by SOPHIA)

TRANSIT SYSTEM PROFILES: UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN WISCONSIN

From urban hubs like Milwaukee to rural cities like Hayward, transit provides an important lifeline for many Wisconsinites. In fact, transit systems in Wisconsin provide approximately 70 million unlinked trips every year.[41] However, many transit systems are operating on a shoestring budget. Reduced routes, limited hours, and service territories that abruptly stop at county and municipal lines create barriers for transit riders.

The nine transit system profiles included in this report demonstrate the complex role that transit plays across the state. Each profile provides general information about the community and its transit system, an analysis of transit access, and an overview of the system's finances. Additionally, each profile provides a story from a transit rider local to the area and identifies ways in which the system could be improved to better meet the needs of riders.

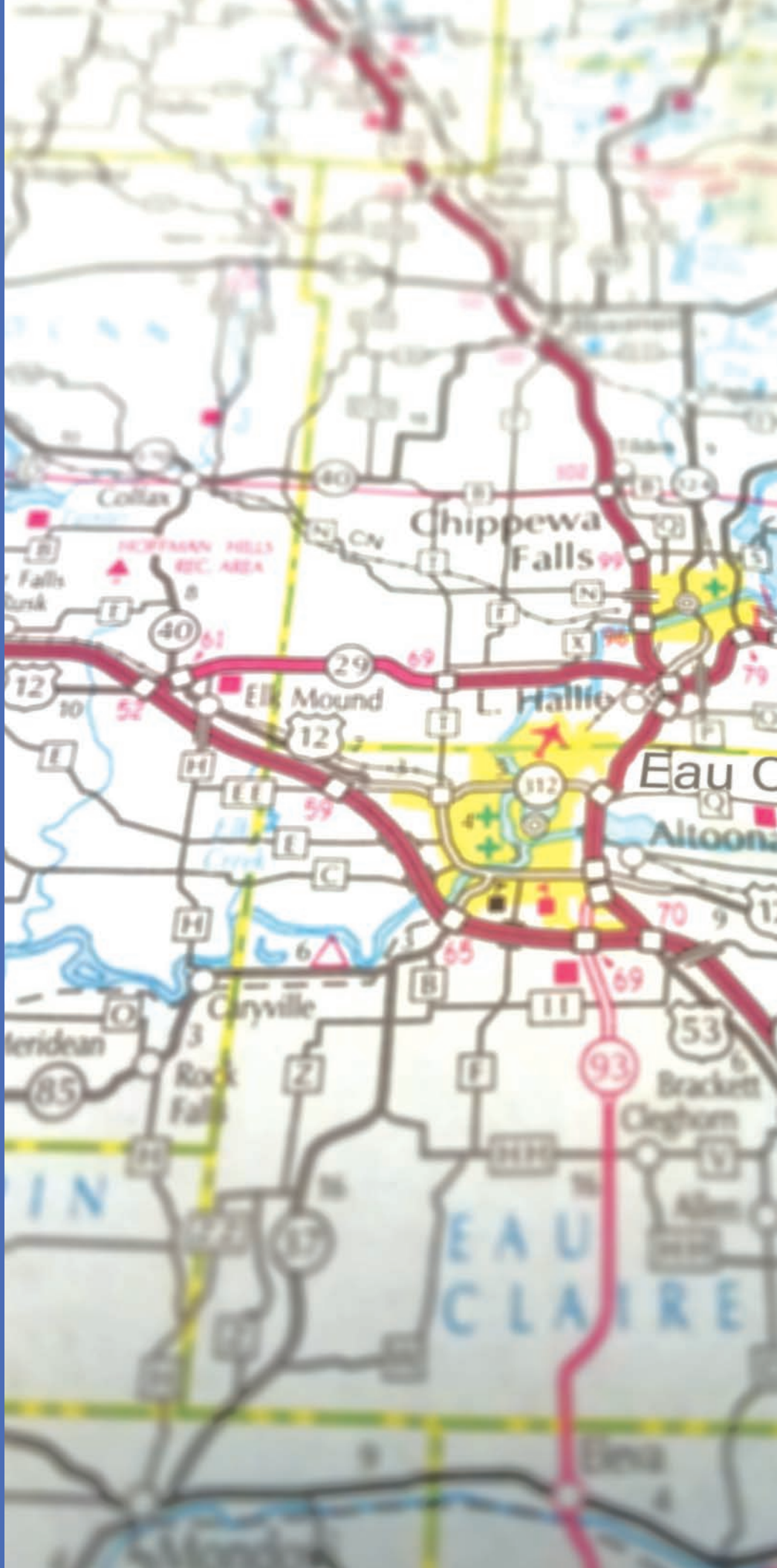
The majority of transit system profiles were written by members of the communities that are highlighted. The profiles were supplemented with data from the 2010 census and more recent demographic samples, government bodies, transit systems, and interviews of transit riders and system managers.

Photography by David Loken

"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

(Story collected by Sierra Club)



Eau Claire

Eau Claire Overview:

Eau Claire, located in west-central Wisconsin, is the eighth largest city in Wisconsin with a population of 68,043. Its geography is shaped by river valleys, and the outer reaches of the urban area are hilly. Ninety-two percent of the population is white, and 4.1 percent are Asian/Pacific Islander. Hmong residents make up Eau Claire's second largest ethnic group, after non-Latinx white residents. In certain neighborhoods, Hmong residents make up as much as 30 percent of the population.[42] The neighborhoods with the highest concentration of Hmong population are on the periphery of the city, in the North and South.

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 (pop. 7,056). Eau Claire Transit also offers paratransit service in the City of Eau Claire and Eau Claire County. Over the last ten years, ridership has averaged around one million rides per year.[43]

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 half hour or once every hour. 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.[44]

Transit Access

The fare structure for Eau Claire Transit is designed to be more accessible for people who rely on transit by allowing more frequent riders to use the bus at a lower price through monthly passes. When prices go up, the per-ride fare

Photography by Jeremy Gragert

tends to rise at a higher rate than monthly passes. Eau Claire Transit also accepts transit tickets, which are a convenient fare medium especially for organizations or agencies that offer tickets to cover rides for those in need.

Partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits also increase transit access. Eau Claire Transit has also partnered to offer free or reduced rates for summer routes to the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library in downtown Eau Claire and the Fairfax Pool on the south side. Community Table, a non-profit organization that offers a free meal every day, has agreements to help clients ride the bus for free to meals. Agencies such as Reach, Inc. and the Career Development Center also work with Eau Claire Transit to make sure routes serve their needs. UW-Eau Claire and Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) work closely with Eau Claire Transit to provide free or discounted fares and bus routes that meet their needs, although CVTC has no bus routes that reach their campuses in northwest Eau Claire.

Photography by: Emma Fisher, WISPIRG Foundation

Transit 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.[45] The park and ride, the Greyhound station and the base for Chippewa Valley Airport Service (van service to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport) make up a regional transportation hub in the northwest as well, but local transit service is at least three miles away. Only Jefferson Lines and Badger Buses come to central Eau Claire.[46]

Despite some improvements, southeastern Eau Claire is another important area that lacks transit service. There is no service within a mile of Lorch Avenue where the County Expo Center, fairgrounds, Lowes Creek County Park, Fleet Farm, a major conference center, a major waterpark, and a hotel are all located.

Altoona has recently expanded transit, serving the northwest area of the city at River Prairie, an area that has grown rapidly over the last decade.[47] Woodman's grocery store, Oak Leaf Surgical Hospital and a new assisted living facility received transit service in 2017. On the east side of Altoona, a new elementary school and Hillcrest Estates (a large mobile home park) lack service within a mile.[48]

Photography by Jeremy Gragert

Car Ownership	Income	Age	
2% without a vehicle 22% with one vehicle	City of Eau Claire median household income: $44.01k Median income by race: White: $43.91k Asian/Pacific Islander: $80.62k Black: $14.17k Hispanic or Latinx: $28.32k Native American: $20.37k	65+ 40-64 22-39 18-21 0-17	3.6% 32.1% 24.0% 8.4% 21.9%
		14% of the population is made up of college students (9,894 enrolled)	

Schedule/Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: 22 Busses Weekdays: 6:15 a.m. - 10:45 p.m. Saturdays: 8:15 a.m. - 6:15 p.m. Buses do not run on Sundays.	UW-Eau Claire students, faculty and staff ride fixed routes fare-free thanks to student fees. Passes for Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) are available at a discounted rate thanks to student fees.	Daily: $1.75 Regular $0.85 Elderly/Disabled $1.25 K-12 Students $3.75 All Day Pass Monthly: $50.00 Regular $25.00 Elderly/ Disabled	Available for those who meet ADA requirements. $3.50 per ride.	All buses are at curb level, handicap accessible, and have bike racks sufficient for two bikes.

Photography by Jeremy Gragert

One of the only affordable transportation options available throughout Barron County for those of us with disabilities is the ADLIFE program offered through Barron County's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC.) While the ADLIFE program is effective and immensely valued, it is extremely limited for the coverage area and disabled population it serves. There are 3 vans available with a capacity of 4-6 riders per van. As you can imagine, after the medically necessary transports are given top priority, that does not leave much if any openings for other riders in need...There have been numerous occasions that I have had to cancel appointments, shopping, or other community events due to the van already being used to capacity.

-Janell, Eau Claire

(Story collected by Sierra Club)

Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

There have been several areas of opportunity identified for expanded service in Eau Claire. 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.[49]

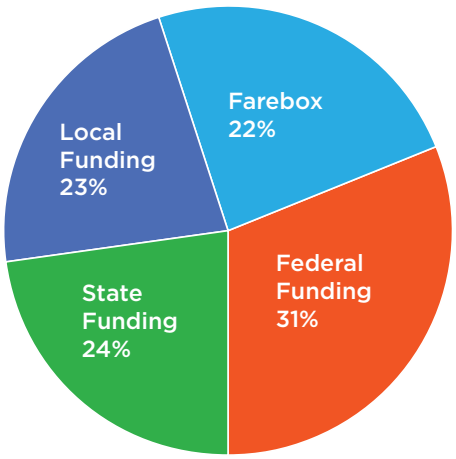
The transit center in downtown Eau Claire was built in 1985 as a temporary structure and cannot even fit all of the buses it needs, so the city continues to work with the private sector to design and develop a larger transit center that also includes a ticket office, public restrooms and an indoor waiting area. The project will likely remain in downtown Eau Claire and include low-income housing, market-rate residential housing and retail space.[50] Fortunately, in March 2018 the City of Eau Claire received a $5 million federal TIGER grant to fund the transit center portion of the building and purchase four new buses.

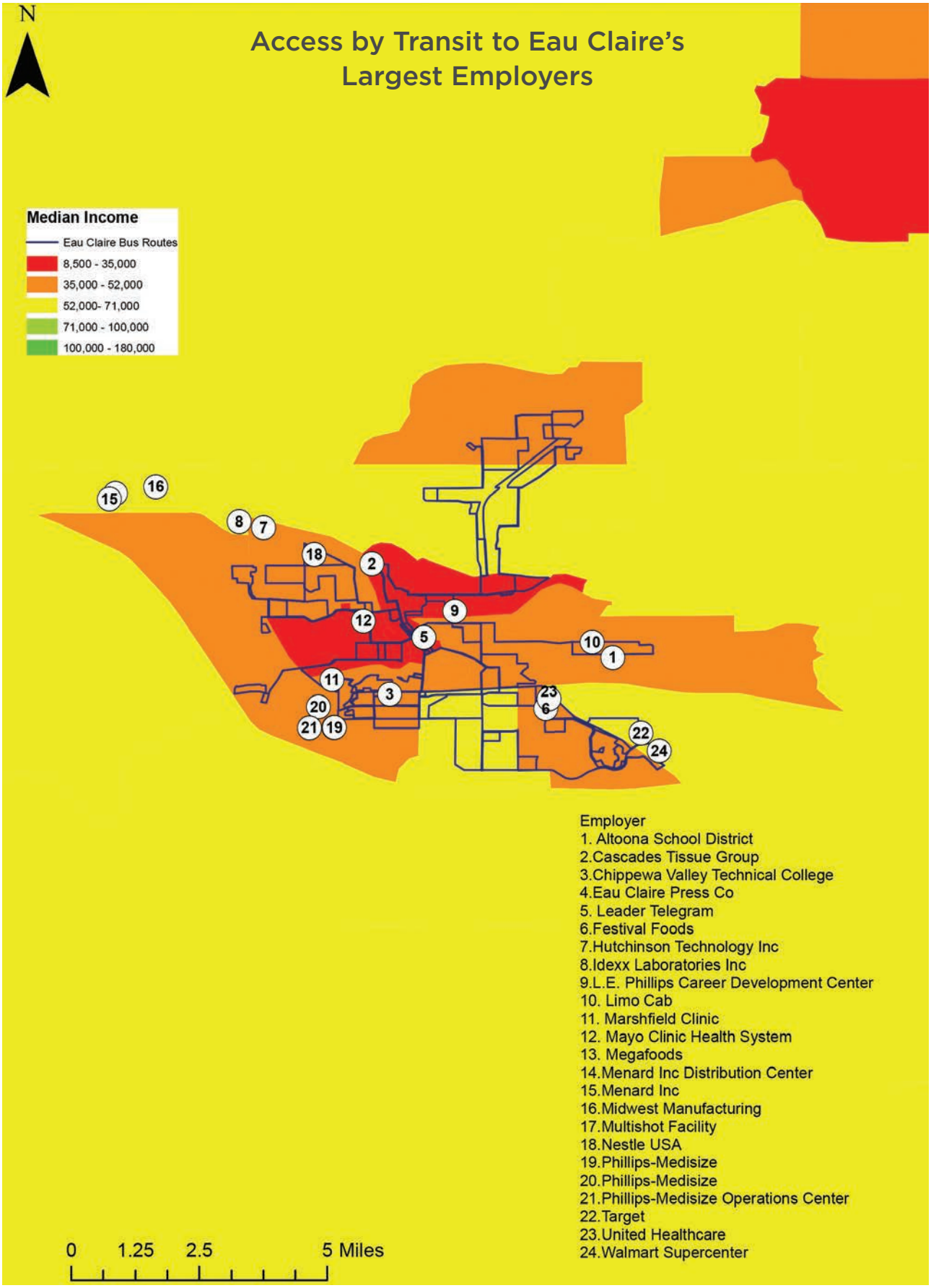
Greater funding from the state or a funding mechanism, such as a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), that allows for Eau Claire Transit to collaborate with neighboring communities and counties to fund routes that go across municipal boundaries, has long been considered crucial for the future of transit service in the Eau Claire area.[51]

Most rural areas in the region have more low-income households than the cities, so connecting people to jobs, businesses, services and educational opportunities that exist in the city has often been a stated need.[52] Additional bus routes, including along Highway 12, connecting Augusta, Fall Creek, Altoona and Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls to Lake Hallie to Eau Claire, and Menomonie to Elk Mound to Eau Claire (attempted in 2013) have been discussed as important improvements to better connect cities in the region to better serve riders, because life does not stop at municipal lines.

Eau Claire Transit Funding Sources[46]

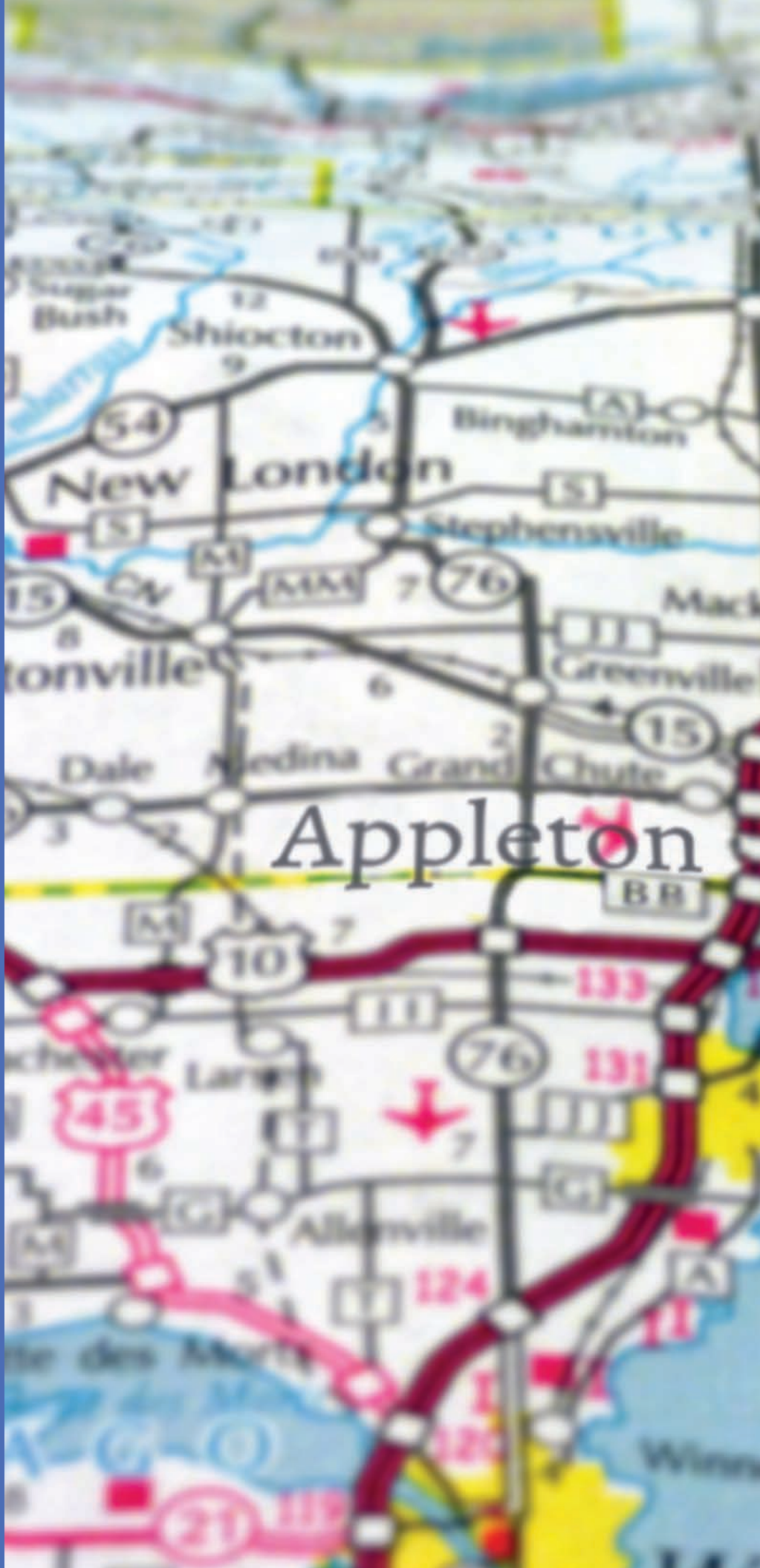
(2016)

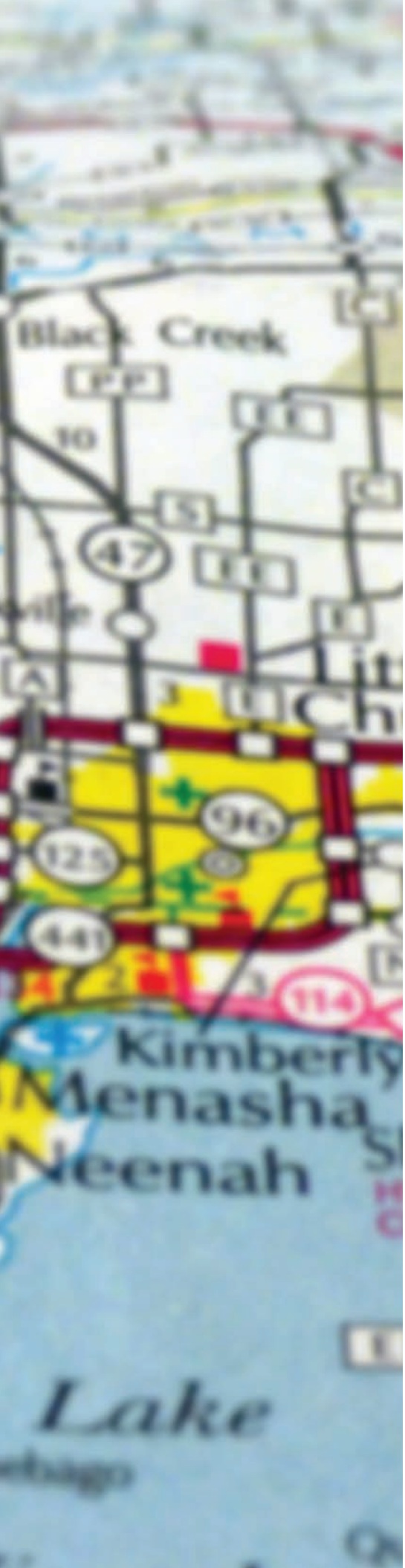



N
Access by Transit to Eau Claire's Largest Employers
Median Income
Eau Claire Bus Routes
8,500 - 35,000
35,000 - 52,000
52,000- 71,000
71,000 - 100,000
100,000 - 180,000
15
16
8
7
18
2
12
9
5
10
1
11
3
23
6
20
21
19
22
24
0
1.25
2.5
5 Miles
Employer
1. Altoona School District
2.Cascades Tissue Group
3.Chippewa Valley Technical College
4.Eau Claire Press Co
5. Leader Telegram
6.Festival Foods
7.Hutchinson Technology Inc
8.Idexx Laboratories Inc
9.L.E. Phillips Career Development Center
10. Limo Cab
11. Marshfield Clinic
12. Mayo Clinic Health System
13. Megafoods
14.Menard Inc Distribution Center
15.Menard Inc
16.Midwest Manufacturing
17.Multishot Facility
18.Nestle USA
19.Phillips-Medisize
20.Phillips-Medisize
21.Phillips-Medisize Operations Center
22.Target
23.United Healthcare
24.Walmart Supercenter

"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)





Fox Cities

Fox Cities Overview

The Fox Cities is a collection of cities, towns and villages in Northeastern Wisconsin that are along the Fox River. This report will focus upon the cities in Valley Transit's service territory, which covers 117 square miles and serves a population of approximately 216,000 in ten municipalities and three counties. The bus and paratransit system that serves the Fox Cities are owned by the City of Appleton, but its routes encompass all the various communities from Neenah to Kaukauna, with an extension to the City of Oshkosh.[53]

The Fox Cities have a strong history of transit access; the first public transit service in the Fox Cities was the streetcar system, beginning in 1886. The City of Appleton had the first electric-powered streetcar line in the United States. In 1930, this was completely replaced by buses operated by the Fox River Bus Lines. In the 1960s, the city began to subsidize the service until it took over operations in 1978.[54]

Because the transit system is owned by the City of Appleton, the census data used below is for Appleton. However, the area that Valley Transit serves includes diverse average income, car ownership and age. For example, while the average annual income in Appleton is $53,600, the average annual income in Menasha is $46,500.[55] Additionally, the village of Kimberly has a much higher rate of seniors, with 18.4 percent of the population over the age of 65.[56] Among transit riders, this demographic information differs even further. According to the Valley Transit Development Plan, over 51 percent of system users who responded to the survey do not have an automobile in their household, and 28 percent have a household income of less than $10,000.[57]

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. It includes crosstown bus routes that either run point-to-point or in a circuit around one community without ever passing through the downtown Appleton hub. 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.

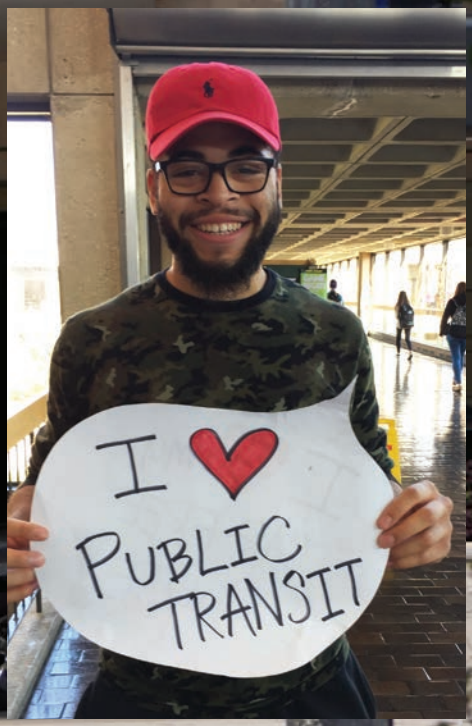
Buses that connect from Valley Transit to the Oshkosh transit service leave seven times a day from Neenah and eight times a day from Oshkosh. The Valley Transit downtown Appleton hub also contains the Greyhound bus office that has daily service to Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago, Minneapolis, Green Bay and 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. It extends past the fixed bus routes and connects to one of six points on the transit system, 20 hours a day, six days a week. Call-A-Ride is also available as a taxi service to members of the general public and brings them to the Appleton Transit Center and back from the Town of Harrison and the Town of Buchanan.[58]

Transit Access
Valley Transit provides much-needed connections, especially to work. A 2014 rider survey indicated 58 percent of transit users did not have an automobile and/or a driver's license. Fifty-four percent of trips were for commuting to work. Most areas of greatest employment density are well served by transit, for population density and employment density are similar in the Fox Valley.[59] Additionally, paratransit options and The Connector provide cost-effective transportation options for those who are unable to use the bus, or for those who work a shift outside of the bus's fixed route hours.

Valley Transit also works with the bicycling community by way of its Rack-and-Ride program, allowing

Car Ownership	Income	Age
1.9% of Appleton households do not own a vehicle, and an additional 7.6% own one vehicle.	City of Appleton median household income: $52.1k Median income by race: White: $53.2k Asian/Pacific Islander: $35.8k Black: $21.3k Hispanic or Latinx: $48.8k Native American: $61.9k	65+ 11.5% 40-64 32.4% 22-39 24.3% 18- 21 6.4% 0-17 25.4%



Photography by Emma Fisher, WISPIRG Foundation

riders to bike to a bus stop, place their bicycles on a rack mounted on the front of the bus and then bike from another stop to their final destination.

Transportation Barriers

Transit in Appleton and the Fox Cities does not run on Sundays, which presents barriers for those who do not have a car or who cannot drive. 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.

Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

The bus and paratransit system that serves the Fox Cities is unique in Wisconsin for the complexity of its service area and funding mechanism. Though owned by the City of Appleton, its routes encompass all the various communities from Neenah to Kaukauna, with an extension to the City of Oshkosh. Its funding is provided by four cities, four towns, two villages and three counties. Other funding partners include the Appleton Area School District and seven profit and non-profit corporations.

Schedule/ Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: 29 Busses Weekdays: 5:45 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. Saturdays: 7:45 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. Service is not available on Sundays.	A 25-minute downtown and riverfront trolley loop runs Thursday, Friday and Saturday in the summer. The Connector Transportation is available 20 hours a day, six days a week to serve Fox Cities residents who work second and third shift and need to travel beyond the bus service area.	Single Ride: $2.00 Adults $1.00 Seniors/Disabled $0.75 Youth Unlimited Day Pass: $4.00 Adults, Seniors/Disabled and Youth 10 Ride Ticket: $17.00 Adults $10.00 Seniors/Disabled 30 Day Pass-$60.00 Adults $40.00 Seniors/Disabled $22.00 Youth	Available for those who meet ADA requirements and Seniors in the Fox Cities. Basic paratransit service is $4.00 per ride, and premium service is $6.00 per ride.	All Valley Transit buses are wheelchair accessible. Most, but not all, have bike racks.

Photography by Collin Kirk

"I have ridden the bus for 14 years. I am disabled and use a walker. I take the bus to get to the grocery store, mall, medical appointments, and for personal business. I take the bus to a neuroscience clinic in Neenah. I have to walk four long blocks from the nearest bus stop to the clinic. It is very difficult in the winter because of the cold and the street conditions as there are no sidewalks. I walk six long blocks to get to another doctor's office on Richmond Street after getting off the bus. There are sidewalks there but if the sidewalks are not cleared in the winter, sometimes I still must walk in the street."

- T., Appleton
(Story collected by ESTHER)

Valley Transit owns 29 buses, 21 of which operate at peak times.[60] 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.[61] Aside from the downtown Appleton hub, the system has a headquarters and garage location and a smaller hub in downtown Neenah.

Funding for Valley Transit comes from about a third federal funding, a quarter local funding, a quarter state funding, and the rest from collecting fares, advertising, and other programs.[62]

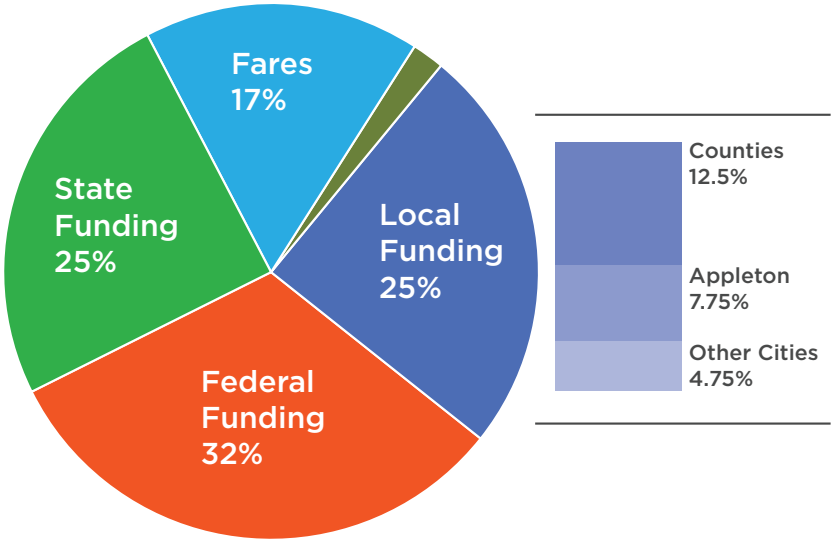
Future Plans

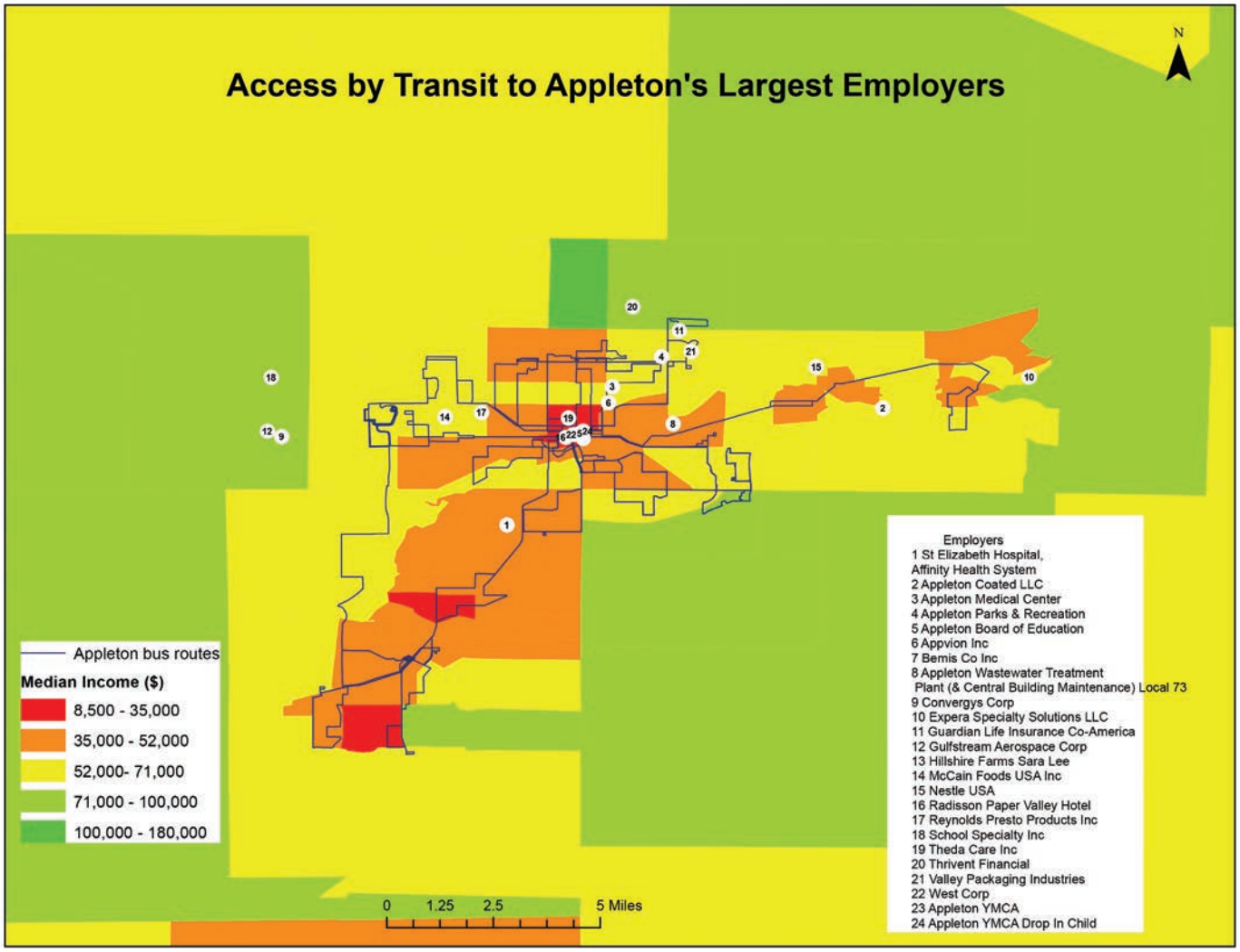
The Strategic Plan, published in early 2015, projected expansions and improvements in service, based on growing areas of requisite density and the increasing needs of seniors, people with disabilities, people who are low-income and young professionals who are more interested in living in proximity to walkable destinations and public transportation than earlier generations. The 2015 Strategic Plan also proposes extending the service to outlying communities, such as Greenville, as they meet density thresholds. Seventy-four percent of Fox Valley areas that are dense enough in population and employment to support transit are served by Valley Transit. This presents opportunities to grow the service.[63]

In 2013, management was optimistic about the possibility of bipartisan legislation allowing an RTA. This would have allowed the people of the service area to vote to put in place a sales tax of up to 0.5 percent ($0.05 on a ten-dollar purchase).[64] It would have enabled a stable source of funding for the foreseeable future for both capital and operating expenses, but this initiative stalled. Funding is essential to maintain and grow this form of transportation. Public transit is a necessity to many members of the community and helps maintain a meaningful quality of life and economic vibrancy through connections to jobs and consumer opportunities.

Fox Valley Transit Funding Sources

(2014)





Marnie of Hayward is an adult with a disability and is unable to drive. She uses Namekagon Transit and is pleased with the price, the service, and the territory and routes, which take her around Hayward and to nearby communities like Spooner.

(Story collected by Sierra Club)

Hayward

Hayward Overview

The City of Hayward is located in the Northwest of Wisconsin. By population, the city of Hayward ranks as the largest city in Sawyer County, but 50th in the state of Wisconsin, with 3,517 residents. In terms of population density, Hayward ranks first in Sawyer County and is tied for forty-sixth place statewide with the City of Superior. To put the City of Hayward into context with other urban centers in Northwestern Wisconsin, Spooner (Washburn County) has a population of 2,665 and Rice Lake (Barron County) has a population of 16,016.[65]

It is important to account for the additional population of the nearby Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Reservation, which adds another 2,803 individuals to the Hayward area's population.[66] When taking into account the ridership potential of both the City of Hayward and the LCO Reservation, there are 4,865 potential riders in the greater Hayward area, not including the remainder of Sawyer County.

While the population of Hayward is more or less stable, it has a seasonal influx of tourists - in the summer for fishing and vacationing, and in the winter for the annual American Birkebeiner cross-country ski event, which brings an additional 30,000 people to the greater Hayward area.[67] Despite the seasonal economic ebbs and flows, the median income falls well below that of other cities in Wisconsin. Additionally, Hayward is growing much older as younger residents move away for college or employment outside of the region.[68]

The City of Hayward is majority white (85 percent), and the neighboring LCO Reservation is majority Tribal members. [69] Annual income by race varies little except between white and Native American residents ($26,700 to $37,300, respectively).[70] The population of the City of Hayward is best described as aging, with 1,017 residents considered seniors, compared to 463 adults, 428 children, and a relatively small college population of just 154.[71] The growing age gap shows that the population either already needs reliable access to public transportation or will need it soon in order to reach medical

appointments and basic necessities within the greater Hayward area.

Namekagon Transit Overview

Namekagon Transit, formerly known as Sawyer County LCO Transit, was initially established to shuttle users of the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Casino, located in the LCO reservation.[42] Today, however, Namekagon Transit serves the City of Hayward and LCO, providing public transportation via shuttle to any resident of Sawyer County and offering additional services to residents of nearby Washburn and Barron Counties on a rotating daily schedule. Other major cities served by Namekagon Transit include Spooner, Shell Lake, Rice Lake and Turtle Lake. For the purposes of this report, Namekagon Transit will refer specifically to the Hayward, LCO and Sawyer County areas.

Currently, there are three fixed routes in the City of Hayward that provide access to key services and job hubs such as the courthouse, grocery store, hospital, and LCO Casino. Additionally, with a reservation placed one day in advance of an anticipated ride, residents of Sawyer County may schedule a ride with Namekagon Transit from their door to any desired location within the service area.

In order to provide equitable transportation to all Hayward and Sawyer County residents, Namekagon Transit provides paratransit for those with disabilities. As such, vans are equipped with wheelchair ramps and securement areas. Additional pickup locations along the fixed routes can be arranged for riders with disabilities, provided the new location is within 3/4 of a mile from established stops. Additionally, service animals are permitted on all Namekagon Transit vans.[4] Otherwise, non-service animals are permitted if they are transported in a pet carrier that can be placed upon the rider's lap.[74]

Transit Access

For residents in Northwestern Wisconsin who lack a personal vehicle or who have a disability that prevents them from driving, Namekagon Transit provides a valuable service to Hayward and Sawyer County communities. This public transportation system allows residents the opportunity to travel to medical appointments, purchase groceries and clothing, and arrive to work on time. As an added bonus, Namekagon Transit connects Hayward residents to nearby cities, including Barnes, Rice Lake and Winter on a semi-regular schedule. This is especially important because travel times between towns and cities in this region are often over one hour in length one way.

Photography by Emma Fisher, WISPIRG Foundation

Namekagon Transit provides an example of how transit can function, even in a less densely populated area. The use of shuttles rather than large buses meets the needs of the smaller population density, and the door-to-door pickup option provides flexibility to better meet the needs of transit users in the area.

Transportation Barriers

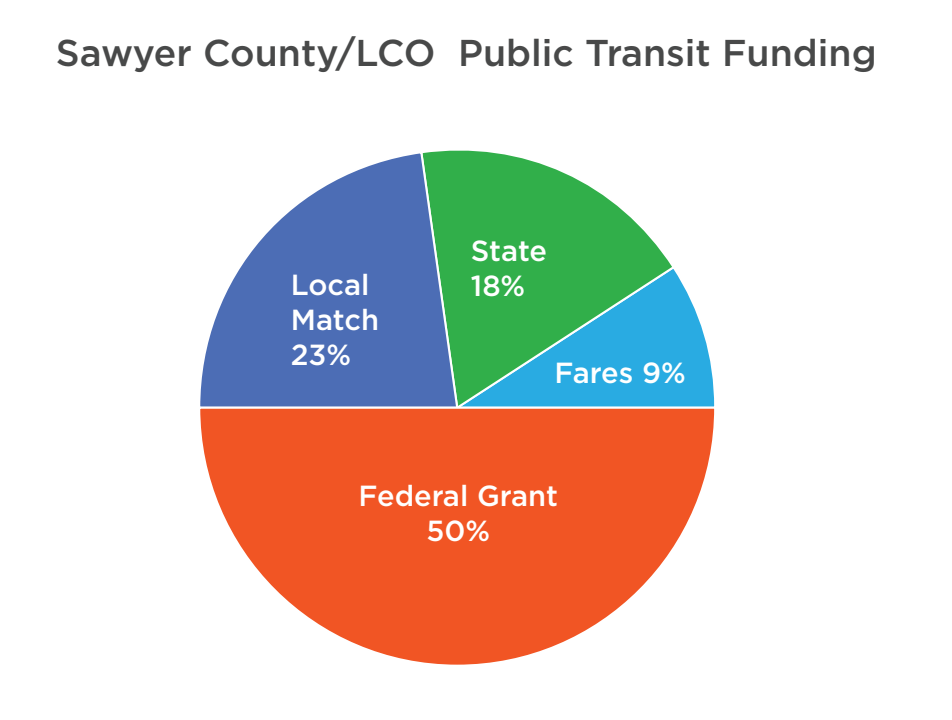
Cost can be a barrier for some residents. Currently, the typical fare for a Namekagon Transit rider is $1.00 or $2.00 at certain peak hours. While this is less than in other urban areas in Wisconsin, such as Madison with a standard $2.00 fare, not all residents of Hayward can afford this cost on a regular basis. For those

Car Ownership	Income	Age
5% without a vehicle 41% with one vehicle	Sawyer County median household income: $49.9k City of Hayward median household income: $34.43k Median income by race: White: $35.05k Asian/Pacific Islander: $59.3k Hispanic or Latinx: $48.5k Native American: $38.8k Mixed Race: $34.7k	65+ 21.1% 40-64 28.2% 22-39 22.5% 8- 21 7.5% 0-17 20.8%

who receive food stamps or who find themselves between jobs, accessible transportation may still prove difficult in Hayward despite the existence of Namekagon Transit. Furthermore, the transit system's service ends at 8:30 p.m. on weekdays and 9:00 p.m. on Fridays and weekends; for those who need transportation for a second shift job or evening entertainment, the hours may be limiting.

Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

Public transit funding for Sawyer County/ LCO is comprised half of federal grant funding, about a quarter from local fundraising, a fifth from state funding, and billed income such as advertisement and fares to constitute the remaining tenth of the budget. Seventy percent of local funding comes from the LCO.



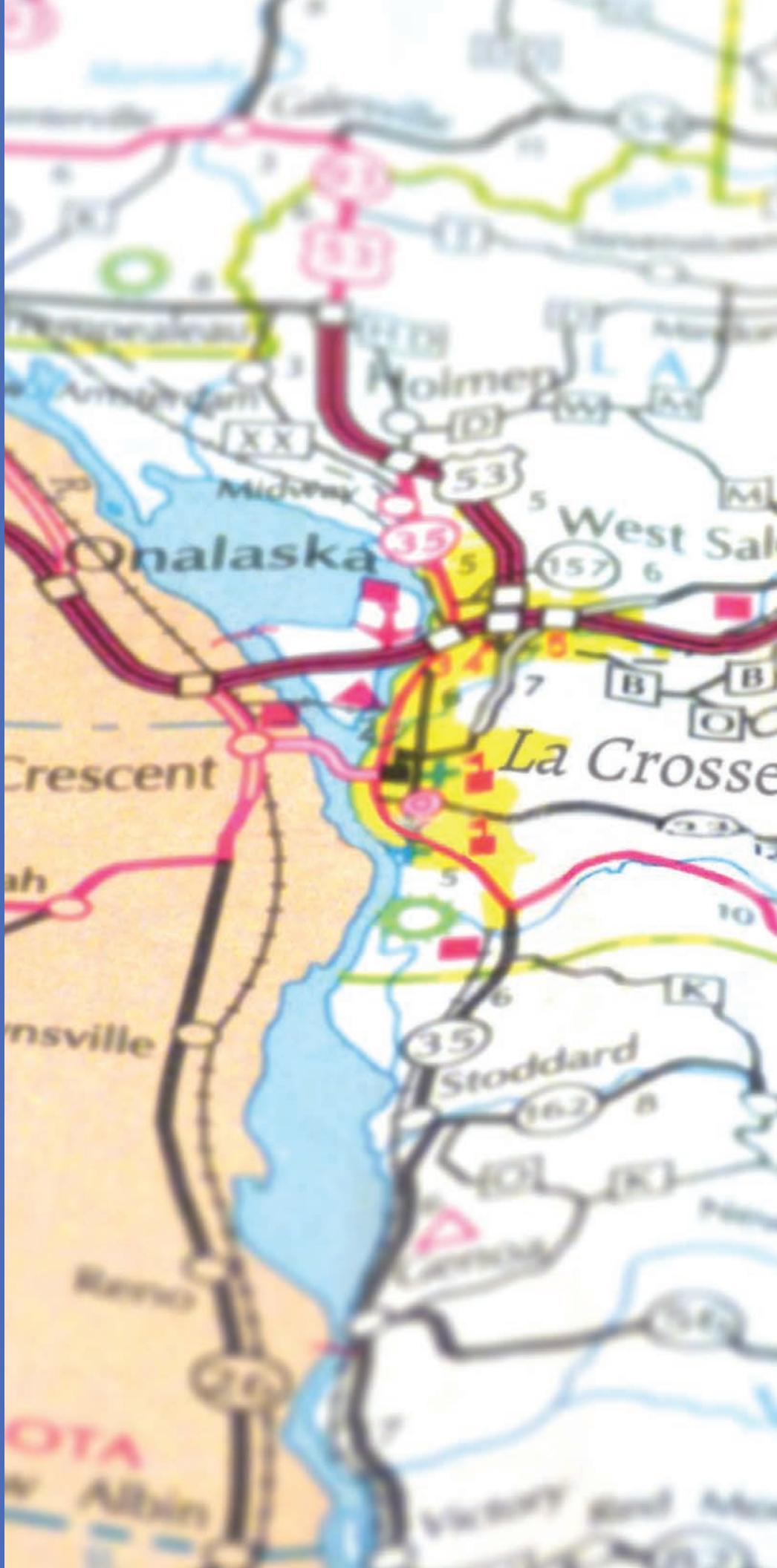
For a rural transit system, Namekagon transit shows a lot of promise. However, as with other transit systems across the state, there are many opportunities for expansion. While the doorstep pickup is a unique and efficient model for rural transit, there are times of the year when those rides must be scheduled two days in advance, which can be inconvenient for the rider. If shuttles are consistently booked, increasing their number or hours of operation could be a possibility to improve service. Expanded fixed routes or hours could help meet more needs of those in the area. Because internet access is not reliable throughout the region, a mobile app could provide the most up-to-date information to potential riders who do not have internet access but who do have mobile data plans. Greater funding support and increased regional collaboration could allow for further improved service throughout Sawyer, Washburn, Barron and Bayfield counties.

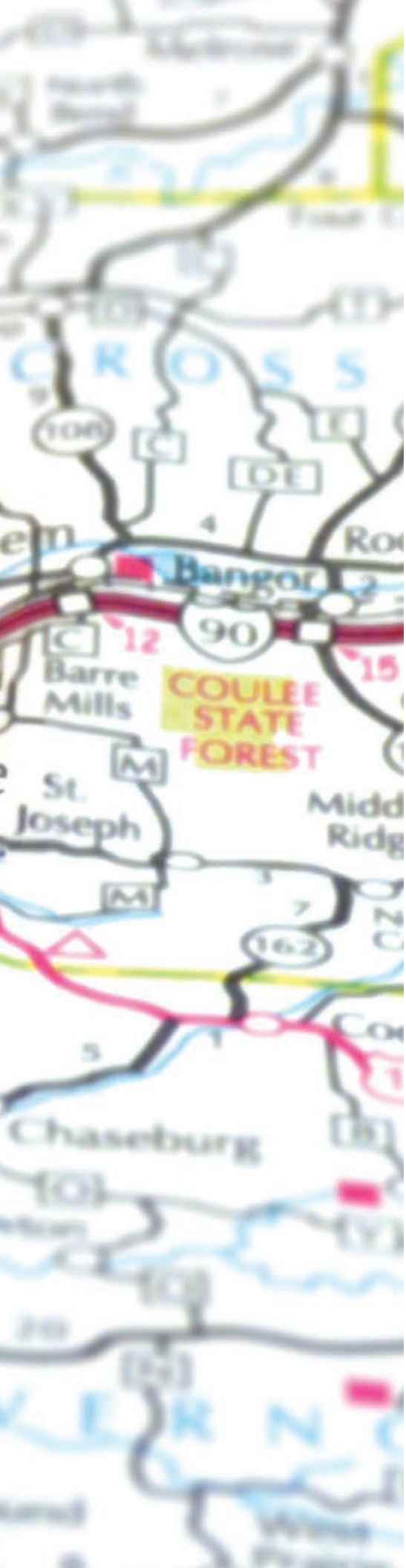
Schedule/Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: 28 Vehicles Weekdays: 6:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m. Weekends: 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Three fixed routes in Hayward, but also offers door-to-door pickup for those who can't otherwise get to a designated stop or who need to access a location outside of the fixed routes. There are also weekly regional routes that travel to other cities as far as 50 miles away: Barnes, Rice Lake and Winter.	Peak Times (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.): $2.00 Non-Peak Times: $1.00 Seniors or people with disabilities may apply for a discounted fare.	A paratransit model is integrated into the door-to-door pickup model that Namekagon Transit offers.	Wheelchair accessible. Most have bike racks.

"The bus system has made it difficult for me to find full time employment; mainly because the route might not be close to where the office is, or it has limited times of the day when it travels to certain areas. Also if I'm working late at night I have to wait almost an hour for the bus."

-Rachel, La Crosse

(Story collected by the Sierra Club)





La Crosse

La Crosse Overview

La Crosse County includes the City of La Crosse, the City of Onalaska and several smaller towns and villages. City of La Crosse residents have the best public transportation access in the county, but some more limited public transportation is also available in areas adjacent to the city. For rural residents and those in towns and villages farther from the City of La Crosse, there are few or no public transportation options at this time. The La Crosse area's transportation challenges are unique in some ways due to the geography of the region. The long, densely-populated areas bounded by the Mississippi in the West and the blufflands in the East mean longer commute times and fewer roadways, leading to more congestion and, for those without reliable private vehicles, fewer options.

La Crosse's total population is 52,440, making it the twelfth largest city in Wisconsin. Results of the 2015 American Community Survey show that the City of La Crosse is 89 percent white and La Crosse County is 91.5 percent white. While only a small portion of the population is Hispanic or Black, annual income disparity between races is significant: $40,800 for white residents and

$26,500 for Black residents.

Municipal Transit Utility Overview

The City of La Crosse's Municipal Transit Utility (MTU) serves the City of La Crosse and parts of some adjacent townships in addition to French Island, La Crescent, Minnesota, and portions of Onalaska. The service is owned and operated by the City of La Crosse with financial support from the communities served. All MTU buses are wheelchair accessible and all are equipped with bicycle racks.[75]

The current La Crosse MTU system runs nine fixed routes year-round, a demand-response service for eligible disabled riders called MTU Mobility Plus and two student-centric services whose schedules coordinate with the local universities' calendars: one "campus circulator," operating Monday through Friday, and a free late night "Safe Ride Bus" Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.[76] The bus that serves Valley View Mall and adjacent shopping centers runs half-hour service on weekends from about noon on, but only when the local university is in session.

The campus circulator, MTU GO, was added in 2015. That bus circulates every ten minutes between the UWL campus and the Western Technical College campus, which is on the edge of La Crosse's downtown, on weekdays only from about 7:00 a.m. until about 10:00 p.m. Anyone may ride the bus for the normal fare.[77]

Specialized paratransit service is available for city residents with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route buses. This specialized service, called MTU Mobility Plus, is under contract to a private provider and is only available to individuals certified as ADA Paratransit eligible. This service operates during normal MTU operating hours and requires riders to request a ride at least one day before the ride is needed.[78]

The Grand River Transit Center is a mixed-use building that includes a central bus station with an indoor waiting area, public space, offices, underground parking and apartments on upper floors. It is the hub for all fixed route MTU buses. Restrooms, vending machines and information about transit, businesses, and events in the area are available in the waiting room. A service desk staffed part-time during weekdays provides information, sells bus tokens, and operates a lost and found.[79]

Transit Access

Bus coverage of the city is fairly comprehensive, with most residents living no more than four blocks from a bus stop. But there are pockets, notably the neighborhood surrounding one of the city's three neighborhood centers in Myrick Park, which is also a polling location, where there is no service at all. There is also the area to the East of Losey Boulevard and north of Farnam Street, where the distance to a bus stop is six or more blocks. Some areas are served only as demand-response areas, requiring a rider to contact the MTU for a special pick up or to request the special stop. More than 90 percent of the population of La Crosse is within 1/4 mile of a bus stop.

A number of regional transit systems help commuters travel to La Crosse, including Onalaska/Holmen/West

Photography by Mary Emma Searles

Salem Public Transit (a shared fare taxi service), the Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit Bus that runs fixed-routes between La Crosse, Vernon County, Crawford County, and Minnesota transit systems that allow connections to the La Crosse system.

La Crosse County provides transportation services within the entire county for seniors and riders with a disability. The La Crosse County Minibus operates from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays. The cost, $3.50 to $4.50 per one-way trip, is figured by zone(s) of travel and rides must be scheduled at least one day in advance.[80]

Transportation Barriers

Current and future challenges include expanding schedules and service routes to allow more people to efficiently and regularly commute by bus to work, school, shopping, entertainment and appointments in and outside of the City of La Crosse. Because the current system routes every bus to the downtown transit center and because there are limited transfer locations and a half-hour wait time between routes, riding the bus to work or school is not feasible or convenient for many potential riders. Those without cars, unless their routes and schedules align perfectly, may spend significantly longer than a car-commuter getting to and from work using the MTU. If their work schedule falls outside the MTU's limited hours of operation or their workplace is far from a stop, those jobs are out of reach unless they can find a carpool or a friend or relative to provide transportation.

Within the city, low-income neighborhoods are served by MTU buses, but limited routes and schedules make bus commuting difficult, time-consuming, and effectively limit the pool of accessible jobs.[81] CouleeCAP, a nonprofit area community action program, notes that "Transportation costs are the second largest household expense after housing. For many families, a reliable vehicle can be the determining factor in keeping a job or accessing more favorable employment."[82] The agency operates the "Work-n-Wheels" program,

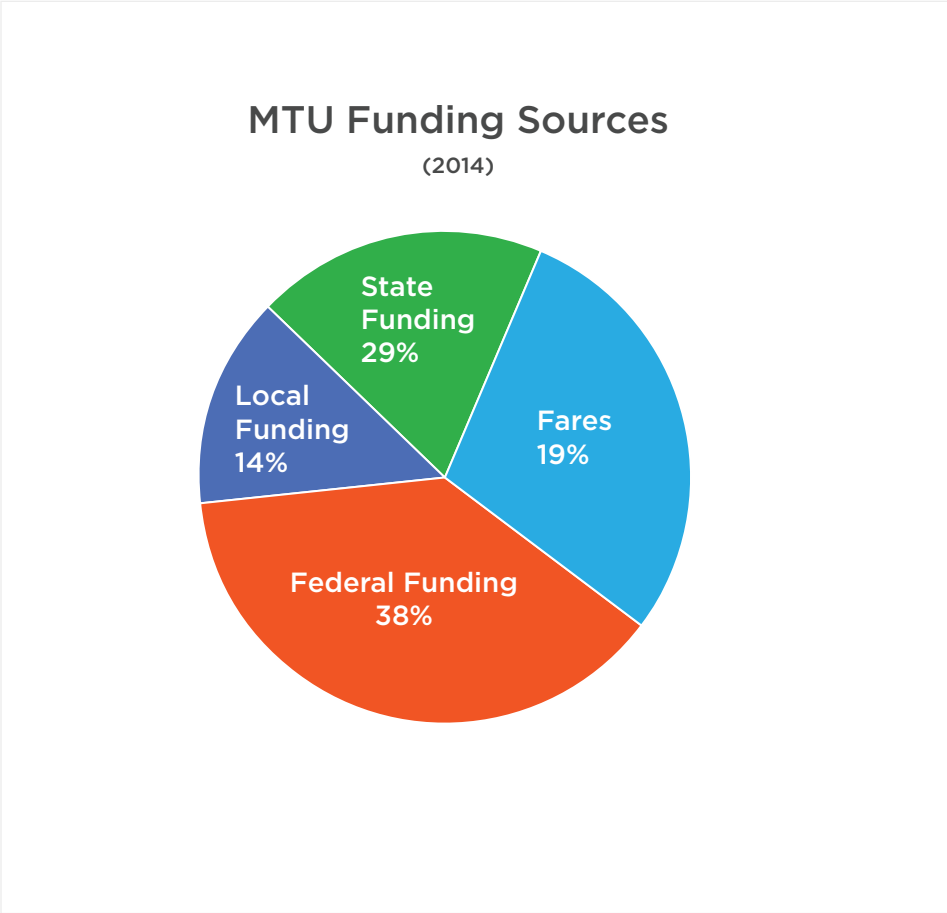
Car Ownership	Income	Age
2.8% without a vehicle 24.8% with one vehicle	City of La Crosse median household income: $43.6k Median income by race: White: $44.6k Asian/Pacific Islander: $48.6k Black: $27.1k Hispanic or Latinx: $29.8k Native American: $13.5k	65+ 13.3% 40-64 26.0% 22-39 27.1% 8-21 17.7% 0-17 15.9% 18.7% of the population is made up of the student body (9,728 enrolled)

providing no-interest loans to help participants purchase private vehicles. Participants must also agree to participate in ridesharing where practical. If better public transportation were available throughout the region, low-income families would not have to be limited by lack of access to reliable private vehicles.

Many workers with disabilities commute via the MTU. Schedules and routes are specially tailored to serve this population. Accessible buses and personable drivers have also made a difference. However, beyond work hours, and especially on evenings and weekends, lack of public transportation means limited access to public activities and entertainment, like going to the movies or a concert.

This is a problem not just for city residents but also for those wishing to travel within the county and region. Those without cars have no options other than finding rides with friends or paying for costly taxi service.

Bus schedules that end early and/or do not provide service on weekends make public transportation an unattractive alternative for daily transportation needs. Again, those with no or unreliable private transportation are left out of some aspects of everyday life that those who have cars don't even consider. If county and regional public transportation options were expanded, especially their evening and weekend availability, more people could travel to businesses and entertainment venues around the region and would have access to more job opportunities.



Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

In 2012, about 70 percent of the County's jobs were found in the City of La Crosse, including most of those with the highest pay.[83] Thousands of commuters from communities north of La Crosse travel daily into the city along limited north-south roadways restricted by the Mississippi River in the West and steep bluffs in the East. An over-reliance on private vehicles for commuting and the underfunding of public transportation in the greater La Crosse area continues to challenge area planners. Even if funding were available, it often goes toward building new roads or adding lanes rather than to transit systems. While WISDOT contends that more road capacity is necessary to alleviate congestion, more capacity rarely alleviates congestion in the long run – and often makes traffic worse.[84] A new road would also eat into valuable wetlands. Area residents have voiced support for updates to and upgrades of active transportation options like bike, pedestrian and public transit, to give more commuters access to more sustainable transportation options.

While most residents own and continue to drive private cars, those who might prefer to stop or reduce their driving due to costs, health, or safety concerns would have a difficult time remaining socially active if they were to rely solely on public transportation as it is currently structured. There are special rates and services for seniors, but convenience and efficiency are lacking. Services for City and County residents with disabilities have limited hours of operation and, in some cases, costs are relatively high.

Another consequence of the focus on car-centric transportation is that funds that could be spent to enhance

Photography by NAOMI

Schedule/ Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: Weekdays: 5:15 a.m. – 10:40 p.m. Saturdays: 7:40 a.m. – 7:40 p.m. Sundays: 7:40 a.m. – 6:40 p.m.	The Safe Ride bus circulates between downtown and campus on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. The service is funded in part by student fees at UWL and Viterbo. MTU GO is a bus system that circulates busses around the campus every ten minutes. The La Crosse MTU offers Night Stops after 6:00 p.m. When requested, the operator will let you off at any point along the bus route.	Single Ride: $1.50 Adults $1.25 Youth $0.75 Elderly/Disabled 10 Tokens: $14.50 Adults $12.00 Youth One-Month Pass: $35.00 Adults $23.00 Youth $25.00 Elderly/Disabled Youth Summer Freedom Pass: (Unlimited one-way trips for June, July, and August): $30.00 Youth Max Pass (Valid for unlimited one-way trips for semester shown): $45.00 Children: (ages 3 and under) are free when accompanied by an adult. UWL, Western, & Viterbo students: Free	MTU operates Paratransit Service for those who meet ADA requirements.	All routes have busses with wheelchair accessibility. All MTU Busses have bike racks.

Photography by Elizabeth Ward

bike and pedestrian infrastructure and beef up the MTU for all city residents is instead spent on infrastructure, maintenance, and management of parking facilities, including for non-resident commuters' vehicles. For example, leaders from the Sustainable La Crosse Commission have pointed out that "property tax dollars are paying $17 million for a 605-car parking ramp … in downtown La Crosse. Going forward, the annual cash and opportunity cost to fund this ramp will be more than $2.3 million or more than $3,810 per car."[85]

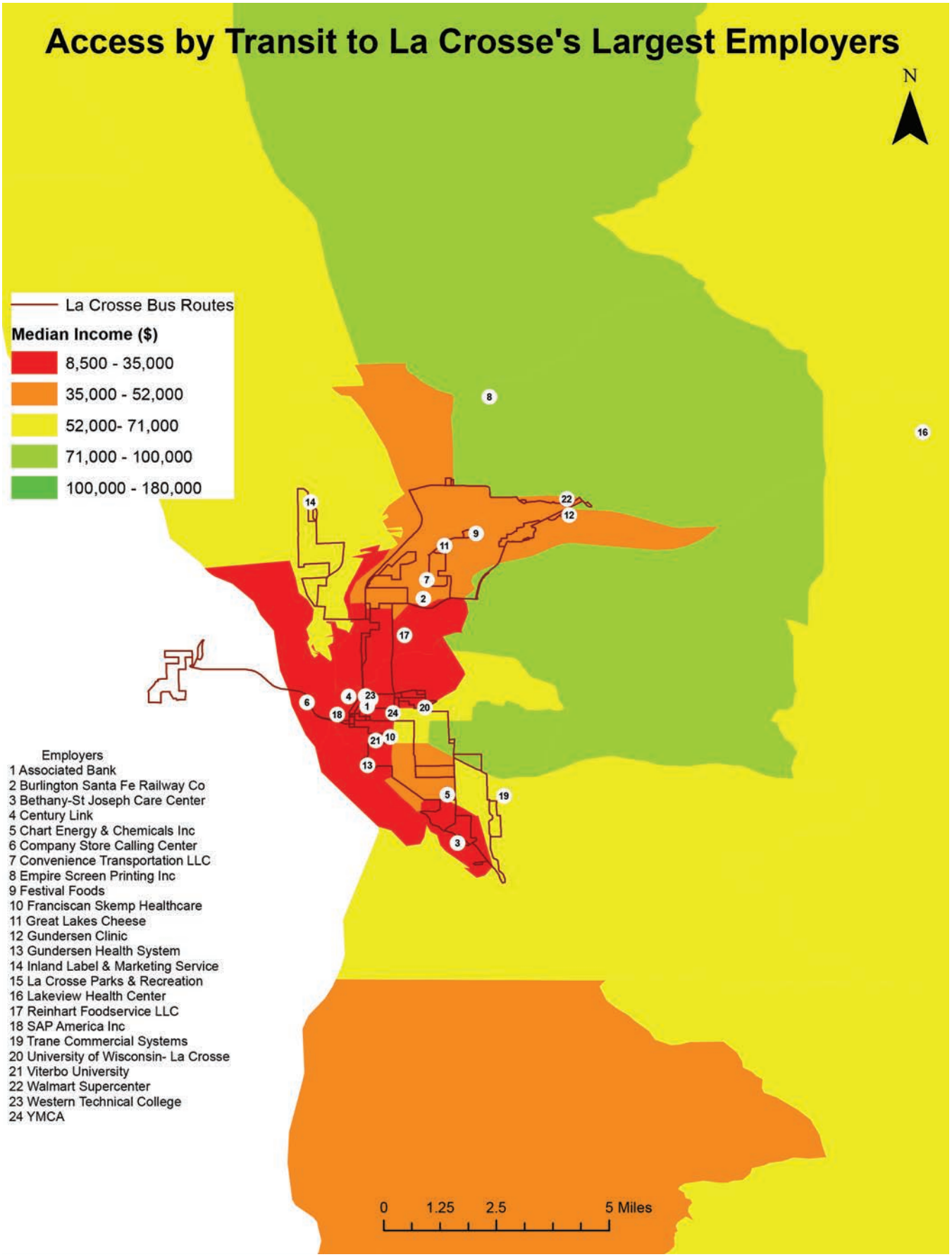
This inequity in spending harms low-income populations who must use their limited income to pay for cars and gas to get around. Those who don't own cars, meanwhile, are forced to subsidize roads and parking infrastructure that primarily benefit drivers with their tax dollars.

In addition, much of the County's rural population – drivers and non-drivers alike – are currently underserved. With Wisconsin's rural roads rapidly deteriorating and transit systems only able to offer limited service, a growing number of people outside major cities are left behind by the transportation system.

Capital funds for buses are generally obtained from federal programs, though funding is not guaranteed.[86] A multi-agency effort has recently finalized researching the feasibility of adding two additional regional transit routes.[87] One would run from La Crosse to Tomah, Wisconsin, to connect access to places like the Tomah Veterans Administration and points between. The other would operate from La Crosse to Arcadia, Wisconsin, where there are major employers that are not currently served by public transportation: Ashley Furniture and Gold'n Plump and points between. This research determined that these routes were feasible, had support of communities, businesses, employment agencies, and potential riders. Assuming a positive response from the state, planners expect both routes to be operational by 2018 at the latest.[88]

The La Crosse Area Planning Committee's recent report, *Coulee Vision 2050*, envisions expanding routes to serve or better serve small communities adjacent to La Crosse. This could include providing more frequent service, implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) infrastructure, and continuing to expand regional transit options. However, it warns that current piecemeal approaches to planning and funding will not work going forward:

"The La Crosse/La Crescent area should explore pursuing a regional approach to providing and funding transit service. Within the La Crosse/La Crescent region there are currently four public entities providing transit service, each of which is funded separately … This distributed model is a result of a piecemeal approach to transit, wherein local communities and stakeholders have created, funded and maintained their own transit solutions to their own needs. As the region has grown more interdependent, this model is no longer meeting the needs of residents and businesses. The region should consider consolidating the administration and funding of transit service under a single organization to improve efficiencies and reduce disparities in service within the region."[89]


Access by Transit to La Crosse's Largest Employers
N
La Crosse Bus Routes
Median Income ($)
8,500 - 35,000
35,000 - 52,000
52,000- 71,000
71,000 - 100,000
100,000 - 180,000
Employers
1 Associated Bank
2 Burlington Santa Fe Railway Co
3 Bethany-St Joseph Care Center
4 Century Link
5 Chart Energy & Chemicals Inc
6 Company Store Calling Center
7 Convenience Transportation LLC
8 Empire Screen Printing Inc
9 Festival Foods
10 Franciscan Skemp Healthcare
11 Great Lakes Cheese
12 Gundersen Clinic
13 Gundersen Health System
14 Inland Label & Marketing Service
15 La Crosse Parks & Recreation
16 Lakeview Health Center
17 Reinhart Foodservice LLC
18 SAP America Inc
19 Trane Commercial Systems
20 University of Wisconsin- La Crosse
21 Viterbo University
22 Walmart Supercenter
23 Western Technical College
24 YMCA
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

"I have to get up shortly after 3:00 am, so that I can leave around 5:00 am to catch my bus in the morning. I get to work at 6:00 am. I work until 2:30 pm. I get home around 4:00 pm... But, I only live about a 19-20 minute drive from work. Every morning I have to catch three different buses to work and three different busses home from work. That means that in the winter I have two short walks and six different times I have to stand out in the freezing cold waiting for a bus... If I am one minute late, I will be 30 minutes late for work because the buses don't run frequently enough. I try to make sure this never happens, but it adds a high level of stress to my mornings and to the end of my work day."

-Brinnan, Madison

(Story collected by Sierra Club)

Madison Metropolitan Area

Madison Metropolitan Overview

The city of Madison is in Dane County, and is interconnected with the smaller cities of Middleton, Monona, Fitchburg and Verona. The metropolitan area lies among the chain of Yahara Lakes (Monona, Mendota, Wingra and Waubesa).

The City of Madison is the second largest city in Wisconsin, with an estimated population of 252,551.[90] The City of Madison's population is 84.1 percent white, 5.2 percent Hispanic or Latinx, 4.3 percent Black, 4.1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and 2.3 percent mixed race or other.[91] Additionally, Madison is not aging as rapidly as many other cities in the state. Many residents in the Madison area are students and young professionals in their 20s and 30s. The median age in the 2010 census was 30.9 years, and 68.5 percent of the residents are under the age of 45.[92]

Madison Metro Overview:

Madison Metro Transit serves the City of Madison, as well as the cities of Middleton, Fitchburg, Verona, the Town of Madison, and the Village of Shorewood Hills. Madison Metro is the second largest transit system in the state of Wisconsin. With approximately 60 fixed routes, Madison Metro services many popular destinations like grocery stores, hospitals, healthcare facilities, libraries and institutions for higher education. The service includes four routes that specifically serve the UW-Madison campus. Madison Metro Transit routes heavily service popular tourist locations such as State Street, Capitol Square, and other central locations. Madison Metro also offers paratransit van rides for those who are

Photography by Emma Fisher, WISPIRG Foundation

unable to use fixed routes.[93]

Transit Access

The Metro Transit system is organized around four transfer points on each side of the city. Because most routes connect to the various transfer points, it is possible to get almost anywhere in the city via bus.[94] While waiting at transfer points can lengthen time of commute, the ability to get anywhere in the city is essential for residents in Madison who do not want to drive, do not own a car, or are unable to drive.

For example, Kate is a Madison resident who depends on the transit system for mobility. She was diagnosed with epilepsy at a young age and is unable to drive due to her seizures. Metro Transit has provided a disability pass that enables her to ride the bus at a discounted rate. Kate reflects, "Since I cannot drive at all and due to epilepsy cannot get a Wisconsin driver's license, I have made big use of my disability bus pass."[95] Because she is able to get around thanks to Metro Transit, Kate can get not only to places like the grocery store or doctor's appointments, but also contribute to the things she cares about, attend community meetings, and access volunteer opportunities. Transit can be transformative for those

Car Ownership	Income	Age:
8.3% without a vehicle 30.2% with one vehicle	City of Madison median household income: $61.3k White: $63.0k Asian/Pacific Islander: $71.9k Black: $27.5k Hispanic or Latinx: $50.1k Native American: $26.7k	65+ 9.8% 40-64 26.9% 22-39 33.2% 8-21 12.6% 0-17 17.5% 16.9% of the city's population is made up of the UW Madison student body (42,716 enrolled)

who cannot drive.

Madison Metro strives to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the residents in and near its service area, especially those who live in low- or limited-income neighborhoods. For example, residents of the Owl Creek Neighborhood called for transit access: "Kids in the neighborhood [were] so desperate for something to do that [they'd] walk miles, sometimes on highways without sidewalks, to recreation fields three miles away at La Follette High School [and to other locations]," says a 2013 article from the Wisconsin State Journal.[96] After organizers from the neighborhood collaborated with Metro Transit and the city, Bus Route 31 was introduced to the neighborhood in 2013. Mike Cechvala, a transit planner with Metro Transit and a former planner for the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board, named Route 31 as a positive example of transit expansions that are better serving lower income neighborhoods in Madison: "One of the main requests from that neighborhood was that they really wanted transit service."[97] It provides much-needed connection to areas of recreation and access to job hubs, including Two Men and a Truck movers.[98]

Transportation Barriers

Despite various fixed routes and paratransit options, there are still large portions of Madison and its surrounding municipalities that are underserved both in number and frequency of routes. While Metro Transit would like to expand its bus fleet, the current bus garage is over capacity. Without the capital investment to support a new garage, Metro Transit says it cannot expand its fleet and is therefore limited in adding new lines that would better serve areas in the city and in surrounding municipalities. Additionally, there are many barriers for individuals with disabilities in Madison who rely on the bus system.

In 2011, African Americans were "almost 5.5 times more likely to be jobless than their white neighbors."[99] The percentage of children living in poverty is also much higher in the Black population than in the white population.[100] Low income and high unemployment present barriers to owning personal vehicles, making transit even more important in the city's Communities of Color.

Schedule/Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: 215 fixed-route buses, 20 paratransit vehicles Weekdays: 5:30 a.m. - 12:15 a.m., with specialty campus routes extending to as late as 3:00 a.m. Weekends: 6:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.	There are several routes that serve the UW-Madison campus: 80, 81, 82 and 84	Single Ride: $2.00 Base Fare $1.25 Youth $1.00 Senior/Disabled One Day Pass: $5.00 10-Ride Pass: $17.25 Adult $11.25 Youth $10.00 Senior/ Disabled 31-Day Pass: $65.00 $32.50 Senior/ Disabled $28.00 Low Income Youth Passes: $165.00 Semester $315.00 School Year $35.00 Summer Break Children under the age of 5 ride free with chaperone.	Paratransit is available for those who meet ADA requirements. Paratransit rides must be scheduled a day in advanced. Each paratransit ride fare is $3.25 cash or 1 green paratransit ticket. Tickets are available in packages of 6 for $19.50.	All Madison Metro Busses are equipped with wheelchair ramps. All are equipped with bike racks.

Photography by Jacinda Tessmann

"If you were in a car that could be a three- to five-minute, ten-minute tops, drive. But if you're bussing in, it could be up to an hour and a half to get to the other side of the [East Washington] corridor."

-Denise Jess, Madison
(Story collected by the Sierra Club)

This economic inequality is not only demographic; it is also geographic, with the majority of Madison's low-income population living in peripheral neighborhoods, especially on the south and northeast sides of the city. These areas of the city receive less frequent transit service. In many cases, the transit routes in these parts of the city travel to transfer points, rather than to popular destinations. While the transfer points connect routes to other parts of the city, they also can increase commute time. As such, it is important to improve access, frequency and available routes in Madison's peripheral neighborhoods.

Coordinating daily transportation is often stressful for transit riders who have to make several transfers to get to where they have to go, and limited service can also add a financial burden. Madison transit rider Brinnan's story above is just one example of this. "If I have to work on Saturday, I have to take a cab and this costs about $30." Though it is possible for Brinnan to get from home to work with several bus transfers or using a taxi, it takes a lot of time or costs a lot of money, which adds to her stress.[101]

Despite efforts by Metro Transit, many areas of Madison that are lower income have less frequent transit service due to their distance from the center of the city. For example, neighborhoods along Routes 21 and 22 on the north side and along Routes 50 and 51 on the west side are served once an hour; the routes end at a single transfer point. Additionally, some routes run alternate patterns during different times of day to accommodate for the flow of traffic. This makes riding the bus challenging for new riders who are unaccustomed to regularly checking the transit ride guide.[102]

Beyond infrequent transit access to these peripheral neighborhoods, the routes that do pass through these neighborhoods do not easily connect to job hubs and instead revolve around the transfer points. While it is possible to travel most of the city by bus, it is not always convenient, as Brinnan explained. Long commutes, especially for those who cannot afford to own a car or live downtown, can lead to ancillary costs, like having to pay for childcare.

Those who have the option to choose may be dissuaded from opting to travel by bus rather than by car. Denise Jess, Madison transit user and executive director of the Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, further explains this: "While we have a pretty decent Metro system, the way that it runs isn't conducive for the habits that people might have for commuting... If you were in a car that could be a three- to five-minute, ten-minute tops, drive. But if you're bussing in, it could be up to an hour and a half to get to the other side of the [East Washington] corridor." Jess identified other challenges such as getting to the edges of town, which often requires at least one transfer route and tertiary routes that run less frequently. Improving transit access, frequency, and available routes in these parts of Madison would help connect more people to the places

Photography by David Loken

they need to go like jobs, grocery stores, and more.[103]

Similar to the transportation challenges that the city's lower-income neighborhoods face, many senior living facilities are on the periphery of the city, or outside of the city limits, where transit is infrequent or inaccessible. Cechvala explains:

"The municipality that the bus route is going through is paying for that route. So, for instance, if a route is serving Middleton, Middleton is paying for that service… We have neighbors here that are not part of the system. For instance, Monona is not part of the Madison Metro system, so if there's a senior living facility in Monona or something, we really can't serve it."[104]

This becomes a serious limitation for those who are unable to drive, as transit routes end at municipal boundaries, but people's lives do not.

Madison Metro does not meet the needs for many second or third shift workers, so organizations in Madison supplement service to those who are unable to travel via fixed route but who do not qualify for paratransit service. The YWCA, for example, offers three different transportation services: JobRide provides rides for low-income people going to/from work. The sexual assault prevention program provides safe rides at night for potential victims of sexual assault. Contracted community transportation provides rides to community agency programs for individuals isolated by poverty, age, disability, and language barriers who have no viable transportation options.[105] Amanda Larson, the YWCA transit coordinator, identified multiple reasons that the transportation services the YWCA provides are necessary:

> ***"Madison Metro has a limited service area, limited hours of operation, limited service frequency in many peripheral areas and often requires more than two hours of travel for one-way trips. Paratransit only operates within a 3/4 mile of Madison Metro bus routes and within Madison Metro's hours of operation and, consequently, does not fill gaps in service for the same reasons as Madison Metro. Private taxicab companies are available throughout Dane County and operate 24 hours per day, but are not affordable for a low-income person to rely on regularly. Relatively inexpensive housing can be found in suburban locations, such as Sun Prairie and Stoughton, which currently have no public transportation into the City of Madison. Many lower-wage jobs are located in the employment centers in peripheral Madison and in suburban***

Photography by David Loken

communities like Sun Prairie, Waunakee, De Forest, and Verona, that have limited or no public transportation options. These include retail work, production work, food preparation and some jobs in the healthcare field, such as nursing aids and attendants. Some employment areas, such as Verona and west Middleton, have limited peak period commuter service designed only to support first shift commuting, while many lower-wage jobs do not fit within that schedule."

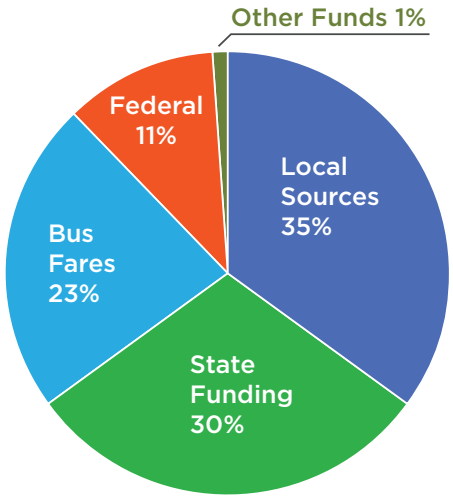
For these reasons and more, increasing transportation options would dramatically improve quality of life for people who are low income, have a disability, or are otherwise unable to drive. Longer hours of operation, more frequent runs, improved collaboration between municipalities, and funding methods that encourage regional transit planning could all be of great benefit to transit-users.[106]

Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

There are many ways Metro Transit service could be improved, most of which would require increased investment. Longer night and weekend hours, better connections for peripheral neighborhoods to the rest of the city, and regional coordination with surrounding municipalities would all benefit Metro riders. While Metro has continued to better serve riders, investment in transit from the state has decreased, starting with the budget passed in 2011. From 2010 to 2015, there was a 5 percent drop in the proportion of funding the state provides. That makes it even more challenging for smaller municipalities

Madison Metro Funding Sources

(2015)

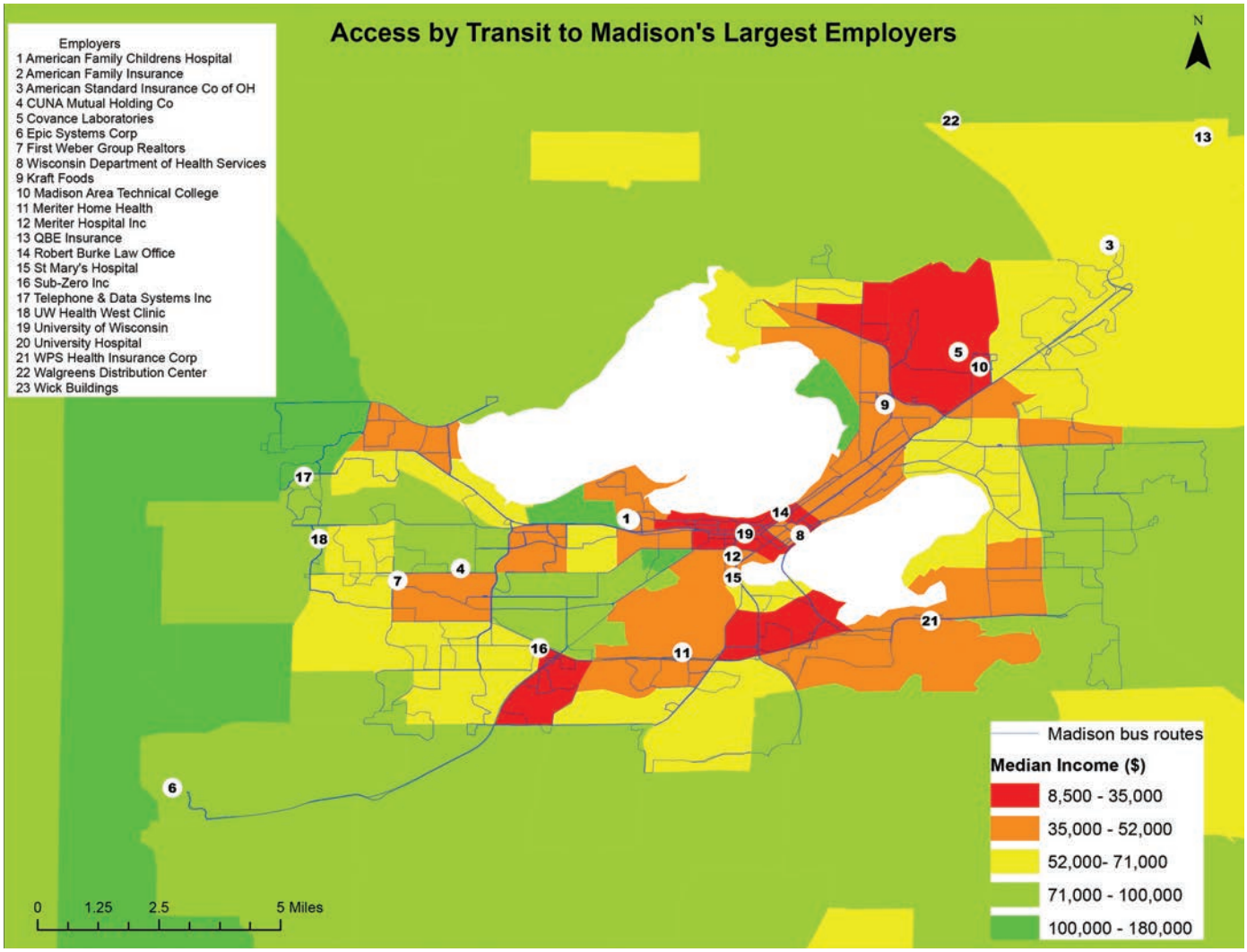


to buy into Metro transit, as local funds are often strapped between addressing other local needs. Since the decrease in state transit funding in 2011, state funding levels have remained relatively steady, with slight increases to account for inflation.[107]

Increased funding from the state to local governments, or more coordinated funding between local municipalities, perhaps through a Regional Transportation Authority, are two potential solutions to this problem.

"It would be a cleaner way of funding things, so we could have a larger service area that everyone participates in, so we could fill in some of those gaps... For instance, if everyone in the contiguous Madison area were part of an RTA, then we could just provide service in that area. If you look at the largest transit systems in the U.S., most of them are either [RTAs] or districts that span multiple municipalities, or they're counties or they're states... Very few are city-run systems for that exact reason." – Madison Metro's Mike Cechvala.[108]

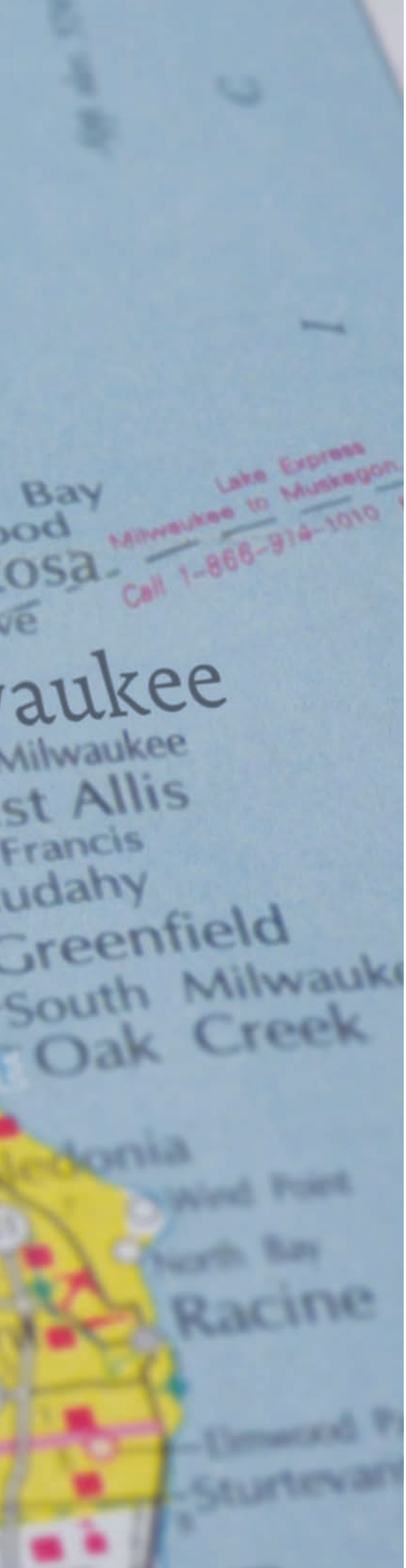
While Metro Transit waits, like many transit systems in Wisconsin, for RTA-enabling legislation to be passed, it is implementing local solutions as they become financially viable. Metro is working on a bus rapid transit system to create express routes while it is streamlining routes to better serve neighborhoods, for example.



"My husband and I take Public Transit to the Symphony and Theater in Milwaukee. We often find ourselves sharing the bus with students (college and high school) who are going to sports events. The young generation is attracted to alternative transportation. We need to invest in transit because it is the transportation of tomorrow. It is important for recruiting young adults to our cities."

– Cheri, Milwaukee

(Story collected by Sierra Club)



Milwaukee County

Milwaukee County Overview

In 2015, the population of Milwaukee was 600,154, the highest in the state.[109] The city's population is 36.1 percent white, 38.5 percent Black, 18.4 percent Hispanic or Latinx, 3.7 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3.2 percent mixed race or other. As discussed in the introduction, Milwaukee faces some of the worst racial disparities and segregation in the state and in the country. In Milwaukee, the average yearly income for white households is over $50,000; it is $27,000 for Black households. Racial disparities are also evident in the unemployment rate: 6.2 percent of the white population and 14.7 percent of the Black population are unemployed.[110]

Milwaukee County Transit Overview:

Milwaukee County Transit Service (MCTS) provides service to Milwaukee County and limited service to Ozaukee and Waukesha Counties. Direct management and operation of the transit system, including fixed route and paratransit service for persons with disabilities, is provided by Milwaukee Transport Services, Inc. (MTS), which is a private nonprofit corporation that contracts with the county. The transit system's equipment and facilities are owned by Milwaukee County, while system workers are employees of MTS. Approximately 39 million people ride MCTS each year.[112]

> **"I wish [the bus routes] would extend into neighboring counties more. But even in Milwaukee County, I don't see why the 28 can't extend to past Forest Home and Janesville Roads on Highway 100. To get to the businesses in that area I have to walk a mile from the Hales Corners Park and Ride."**
>
> **– Patricia, Wauwatosa**
> **(Story collected by Sierra Club)**

Transit Access

MCTS is the largest transit system in Wisconsin, operating 56 fixed routes throughout the service territory. Unlike the other transit systems in Wisconsin, MCTS is county-wide, providing vital connections not only across the city, but into the surrounding suburbs where many employment hubs are growing.[113]

Transit is vital to connect people to employment. 8.7 percent of workers age 16 and over rely on public transportation to get to work.[114] Of the total workers who use transit to access employment, 55.9 percent were Black or African American, 32.2 percent were white, 8.2 percent were Hispanic or Latinx, and 2.4 percent were Asian/ Pacific Islander. [115] MCTS bus riders tend to be regular transit riders, with 42 percent of riders using bus services for 15 or more years, and another 17 percent of riders using the system for at least three years.[116]

MCTS has taken steps to expand job access by transit. The MCTS Commuter Value Program allows employees and employers that meet minimum participation requirements to share the cost of purchasing Value Passes at a reduced price. In addition, JobLines are two specialty routes that provide commuter services for workers from Milwaukee to employers in Waukesha and Washington Counties. Designated funding for the JobLines ends in 2018, and it is unlikely that these routes will continue in 2019 and beyond.

Supporting 1,045 full-time employees, MCTS not only connects riders to opportunities but also serves as an important economic generator.[117] According to a 2015 Milwaukee County Department of Transportation study, MCTS is responsible for at least $342 million in economic benefits for the area.[118]

Transportation Barriers

MCTS provides access to most major employers located within Milwaukee County for residents of most city neighborhoods, regardless of income. The mean travel time to work via transit is 38.9 minutes, but almost 25 percent of workers had travel times of an hour or more.[119]

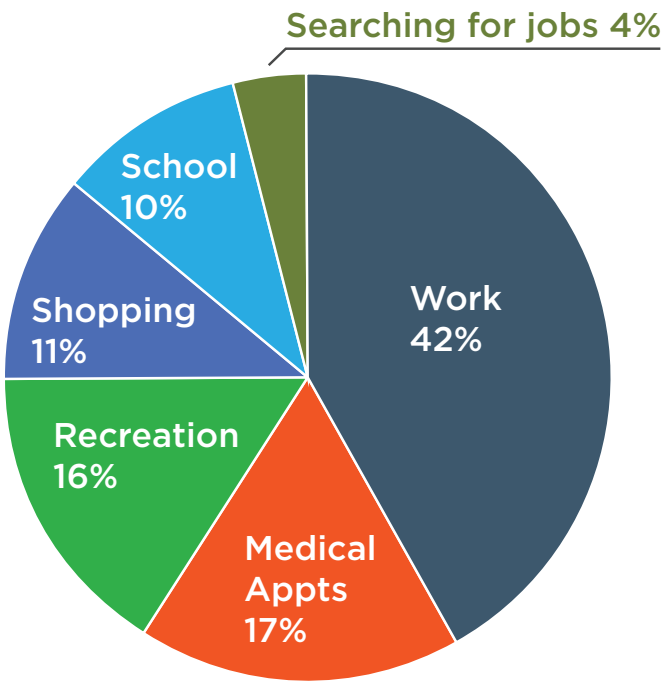
Photography by Elizabeth Ward

At the same time, all of the net job growth in the Milwaukee region has occurred outside of the County, in suburban areas in Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington Counties. This contributes to the chronic jobs gap in Milwaukee, where the number of job openings is lower than the number of people seeking employment.[120]

Many of the suburban and exurban areas have little or no transit service from the city. Suburban areas where MCTS does provide service, such as Brown Deer, Brookfield, and communities in the southern part of the County, have more limited service than within the city.

In addition, transit service reductions over the past decade have disproportionately affected suburban routes. As a result, transit-dependent job seekers in Milwaukee cannot access jobs in many of the suburban and exurban areas where those jobs are located. Generally, transit-dependent individuals in Milwaukee are low- or moderate-income. More than 70 percent of public transportation users

MCTS Ridership Destinations



Photography by Emma Searles

"For me [the bus system] is good because I live in Third Ward, and we have [good] coverage. However, I cannot comfortably take it to schools in the city core as stops tend to be far from destinations and lack of lighting which makes me feel unsafe. Not fair for people who live there."

– Lee Ann, Milwaukee

(Story collected by Sierra Club)

earn under $25,000, and 43.5 percent earn less than 150 percent of the poverty level.[121]

Getting to Work, a report from the Public Policy Forum, examined options to improve access to suburban job centers for transit-dependent city job seekers. The authors identified 29 ZIP codes in the four-county area (Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington) that contained at least 10,000 jobs as "job centers" and mapped the public transit routes to each center. Of the 29 job centers, 15 were primarily within the cities of Milwaukee, Wauwatosa and West Allis, and had reasonably high levels of public transit access. Ten had limited service. Four, located in Germantown, Oconomowoc, New Berlin and West Bend, were completely inaccessible. The report also identified specific areas within the job centers where employers were concentrated enough to form a "hub" for possible bus service.[122]

The authors found several transit-related challenges:

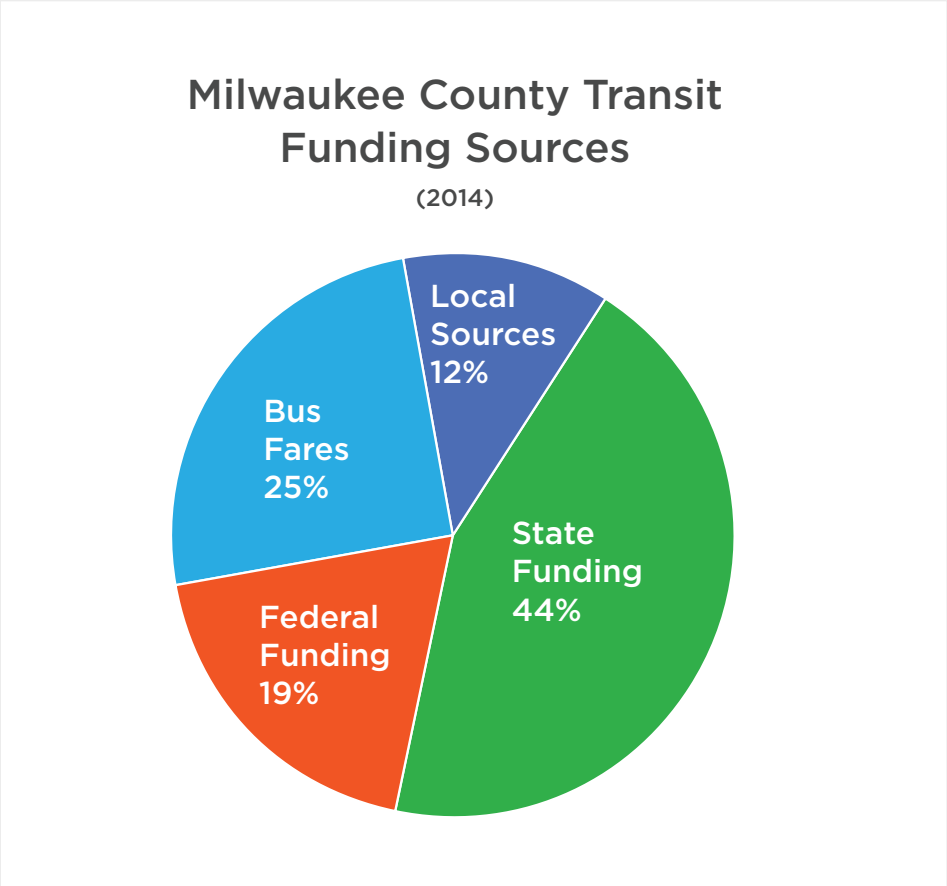
- **Last Mile Challenge**: Centralized bus service was not provided within walking distance of the job center's main employment locations, leaving the "last mile(s)" as transportation barriers.
- **Bus Service Previously Attempted but Eliminated**: Prior elimination makes it difficult to financially justify reinstatement, despite changing needs.
- **Trip Time on Transit Prohibitive**: Job centers with routes that are too long are an unrealistic means of daily commuting for many

Car Ownership	Income	Age		Unemployment rate:[111]
6.1% without a vehicle	Milwaukee County median household income: $57.4k	65+	11.6%	White: 6.2%
29.1% with one vehicle	City of Milwaukee median household income: $38.1k	40-64	30.5%	Hispanic or Latinx: 14.6%
	Median income by race:	22-39	26.8%	Asian/Pacific Islander: 7.4%
	White: $51.4k	8-21	6.2%	Mixed race: 13.5%
	Asian/Pacific Islander: $47.1k	0-17	24.8%	Black: 14.7%
	Black:$ 27.4k			
	Hispanic or Latinx: $35.0k			
	Native American: $35.4k			

potential workers.

- **Transit Service Not Designed for Reverse Commuters:** Several "freeway flyer" routes are designed to bring suburban workers from park-and-ride lots to downtown Milwaukee, but not the other way around

Ultimately, the authors identified and mapped three bus routes that had potential to cost-effectively and efficiently serve suburban job hubs, demonstrated the transit-related challenges, and illustrated barriers inherent in actually developing new transit routes. After modeling three new bus routes to serve suburban Milwaukee job centers, the authors indicated that potential benefits could be generated from each of the proposed routes. In all cases, workers would have better connectivity to job hubs.[123]



Schedule/ Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet : 410 Busses generally run between 4:18 a.m. and 1:14 a.m. regardless of weekday or weekend, however several routes are unavailable on weekends.	Route 6: New Berlin Industrial Park Express. Connects MKE, and New Berlin to the park	M-CARD rides: $1.75 - $2.50 Adult $1.10 - $1.60 Youth, Seniors or Disabled Cash ride: $2.25 - $3.50 Adult $1.10 - $1.60 Youth, Seniors or Disabled 1-Day Pass: $4.00 - $6.00 Adult $2.00 Youth, Seniors or Disabled 7-Day Pass: $19.50 - $27.50 Adult $11.00 - $15.00 Youth, Seniors or Disabled 31-Day Pass: $72.00 - $96.00 Adult $32 - $45 Youth, Seniors or Disabled	MCTS contracts with First Transit and Transit Express to provide ADA accessible van service and American United to provide taxi service to ADA eligible paratransit riders. Cost is $3.50 for each van ride. You may take another passenger with you for an additional $3.50 each way, and personal care attendants ride free.	All busses are wheelchair accessible. All busses are equipped with simple-to-use bike mounts.

Photography by Elizabeth Ward

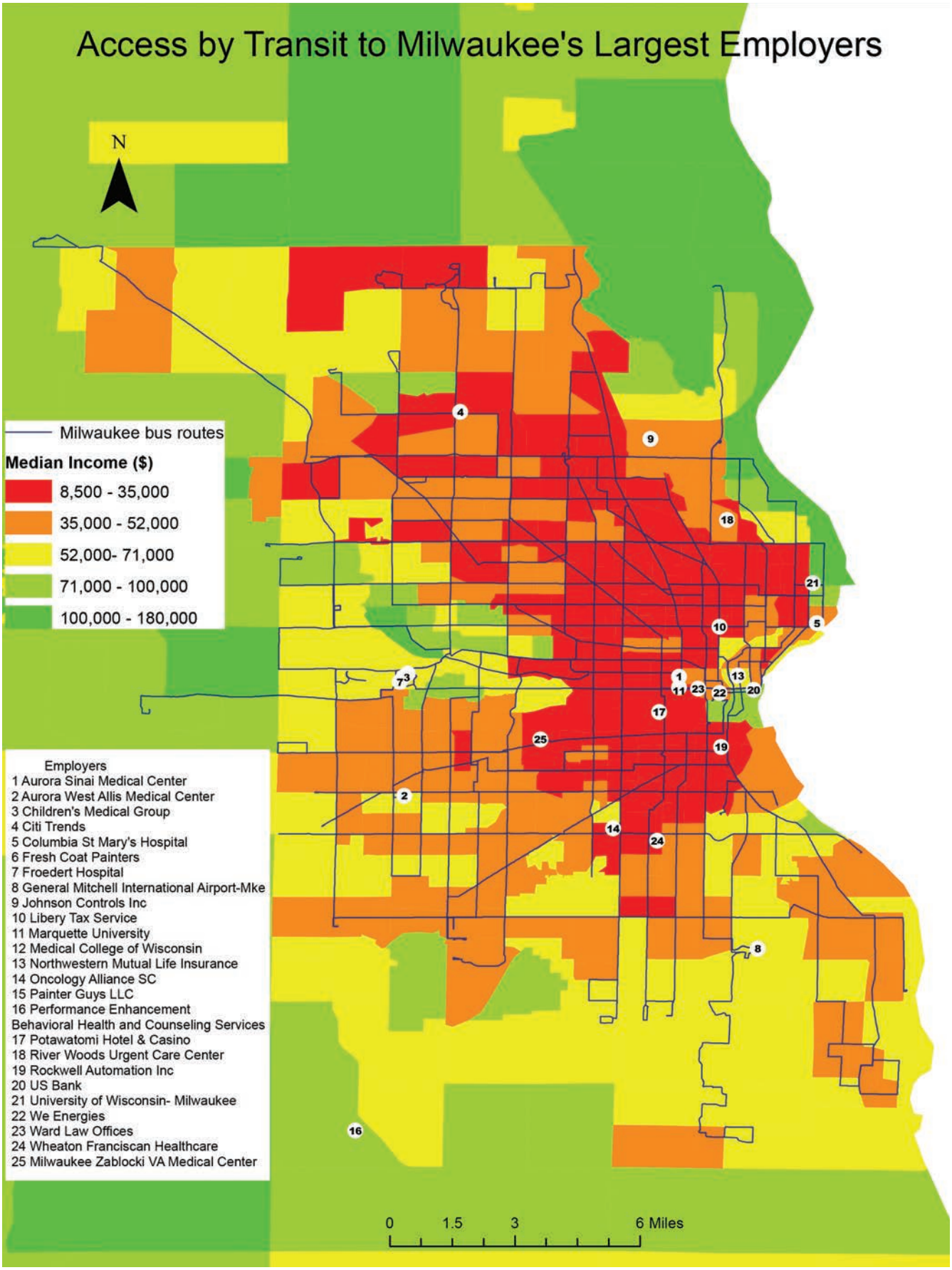
Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service[124]

MCTS is funded by a combination of four primary revenue streams: federal funds, operating assistance from the state's segregated transportation fund, a County property tax levy, and revenue collected from passengers.[125] The system also receives small amounts of funding from the Congestion and Air Quality Mitigation (CMAQ) grant program and through advertising. The system had total expenditures of approximately $163 million in 2016.[126]

According to the Public Policy Forum's report mentioned above, there is significant potential to modify or expand routes to better connect job locations, specifically in the city's suburbs. MCTS has been streamlining routes by reducing turns, marginally increasing the distance between stops and introducing "express routes," that offer faster service to major job centers.[127]

There is significant demand for more bus service to major job centers that lie just outside County borders—Northbank, Southbranch and Franklin to the South, WestRidge, New Berlin and Brookfield Square to the West, and Menomonee Falls, Germantown and Mequon to the North. Adding lines to these destinations would connect a large pool of workers from both the north and south sides of the city to job hubs.[128]

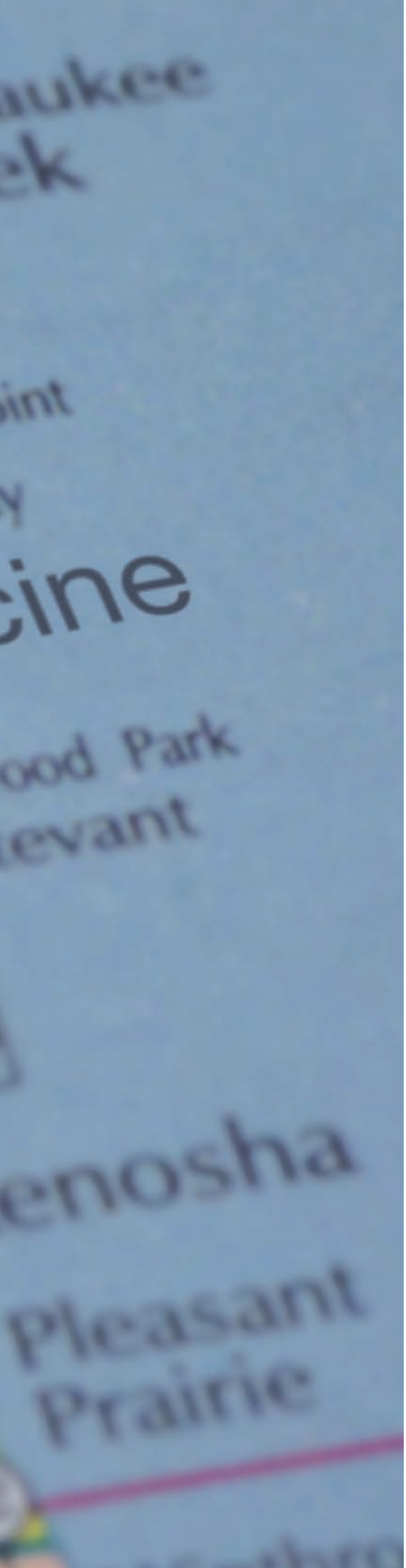
Milwaukee's status as Wisconsin's only major metropolitan area lends itself well to investing in future rapid transit systems. While this could potentially take many forms, one option that the County is exploring is bus rapid transit (BRT)—a faster type of bus service run on dedicated lanes but at a lower cost than light rail. The County plans to build BRT over a nine-mile route between Downtown Milwaukee and Wausatosa, through the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. The new route is expected to have 9,500 weekday riders by 2035 and increase overall ridership on the corridor by 17 percent.[129] If implemented correctly, this line could be a template for a region-wide rapid transit system that connects residents to jobs and other destinations, takes cars off the road, improves air quality, and increases traffic safety.


Access by Transit to Milwaukee's Largest Employers
N
Milwaukee bus routes
Median Income ($)
8,500 - 35,000
35,000 - 52,000
52,000- 71,000
71,000 - 100,000
100,000 - 180,000
Employers
1 Aurora Sinai Medical Center
2 Aurora West Allis Medical Center
3 Children's Medical Group
4 Citi Trends
5 Columbia St Mary's Hospital
6 Fresh Coat Painters
7 Froedert Hospital
8 General Mitchell International Airport-Mke
9 Johnson Controls Inc
10 Libery Tax Service
11 Marquette University
12 Medical College of Wisconsin
13 Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance
14 Oncology Alliance SC
15 Painter Guys LLC
16 Performance Enhancement
Behavioral Health and Counseling Services
17 Potawatomi Hotel & Casino
18 River Woods Urgent Care Center
19 Rockwell Automation Inc
20 US Bank
21 University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee
22 We Energies
23 Ward Law Offices
24 Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare
25 Milwaukee Zablocki VA Medical Center
0 1.5 3 6 Miles

"My husband (83) and I (80) cannot drive after dark, and need transit as much or more than anybody! As the system now works, when the last driver in the family is gone, we are forced to move out of our homes of half a century because of lack of public transportation!"

-Barbara, Racine

(Story collected by the Sierra Club)



Racine

Racine Overview

The City of Racine is located south of Milwaukee and is located on the shores of Lake Michigan and the Root River. It is the largest city in Racine County; 78,548 people live in Racine. The city is 53.6 percent white, 20.8 percent Hispanic or Latinx, and 21.3 percent Black.[130]

RYDE Overview

Public transportation has been a part of the City of Racine since the Belle City Street Railway began operation in 1883. The first bus routes were introduced in 1922, and operations continued as the Belle Urban System (BUS) since 1975. BUS was renamed RYDE in 2017.[131]

The RYDE service area covers all of the City, extending into the immediate surrounding area including to Caledonia in the north and to employment centers in Yorkville, Sturtevant and Mount Pleasant. It reaches several industrial parks, shopping areas, schools, attractions, the Amtrak station and the hospital. There is also commuter bus service from Milwaukee through Racine and then south to UW Parkside and the Metra Station in Kenosha (Coach USA).[132] RYDE provided more than 1,270,000 passenger trips in 2015 alone.[133]

Transportation Access

RYDE operates ten fixed routes from the Corinne Reid-Owens Transit Center on State Street (the restored Chicago and North Western Railway Station), which is a central location in the City. There are several other transfer points throughout the service area. Few parts of Racine are more than 0.25 miles from a route. The route to the I-94 industrial park runs until midnight to accommodate second shift workers.[134] In 2015, RYDE provided over 955,982 miles of route service with 35 buses.[135]

RYDE has coordinated with employment centers in designing routes and hours of operation, for example, to serve second shift employees until midnight. RYDE has also worked with Racine Unified School District (RUSD) to see that bus routes are available for students, particularly high school students. Additionally, some agencies purchase passes for their clients, especially for work or job hunting. Within the City of Racine, transit coverage is thorough for most activity hubs.[136]

Transportation Barriers

While transportation coverage is good within the City of Racine, there are several areas where riders face barriers. In the 2016 Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan for Racine County, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) identifies several unmet transportation needs for Racine County. Current route and travel schedules have not adapted to address the needs of new employment locations, and there is a lack of weekend and late night hours that would better serve those who work second or third shift. Transit access in Western Racine County and between counties is limited, as well.[137] As Southeast Wisconsin continues to develop as a hub of employment opportunities, it will become increasingly important to address these challenges. At the time of this writing, it is unclear what impact the Foxconn technology plant in Mount Pleasant will have on public transportation in the region, and whether the plant will, in fact, be served by public transit, by privately operated shuttles, or by both (or neither).

Car Ownership	Income	Age
5.7% without a vehicle 26.3% with one vehicle	City of Racine median household income: $35.6k White: $45.0k Asian/Pacific Islander: $42.4k Black: $21.2k Hispanic or Latinx: $34.4k Native American: $43.4k	65+ 11.3% 40-64 30.4% 22-39 24.8% 8-21 5.4% 0-17 28.2%

Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

As with other public transit systems in Wisconsin, RYDE's funding is provided through federal, state, and local streams, as well as through fares and other sources.[5] However, over the past several years a decrease in funding, especially from the state, has made it more difficult for the system to effectively serve the region. As SEWRPC reports:

> ***There is a need for a dedicated and increased source of funding for transit from the State. In recent years, there has been a lack of a dedicated funding source separate from the property tax levy to provide the level of financial assistance necessary to address existing and future public transportation needs in the County. Additionally, State and Federal funding, which provides***

Schedule/Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: 42 Weekdays: 5:00 a.m. - 10:10 p.m. Saturdays: 5:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. Sundays: 9:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.	Commuter bus service from Milwaukee to Racine and then Kenosha. Coordinates with Racine Unified School District to serve students.	Single Ride: $2.00 Adults $1.50 Youth $1.00 Senior/Disabled 10-Ride Pass: $15.00 30-Day Passes: $65.00 Adults $30.00 Disabled	Dial a Ride Transportation (DART) is available for those who meet ADA requirements. Rides are $4.00 each way.	All busses are wheelchair accessible. Almost all are equipped with bike racks.

Photography by Elizabeth Ward

the majority of subsidy for transit services, has been decreasing. All of these funding limitations have placed significant pressure on local budgets.[139]

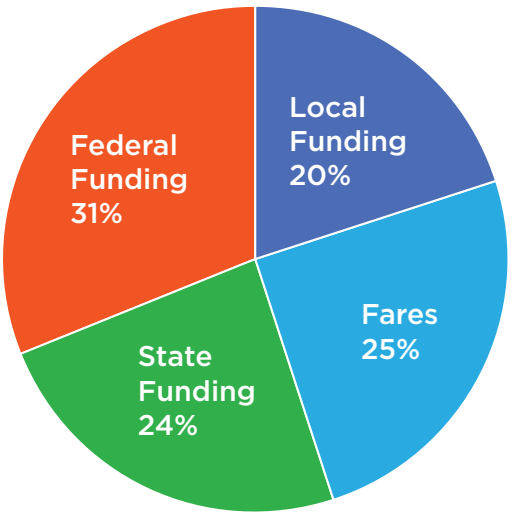
Budget cuts have reduced hours of operation, and it would be beneficial to restore these, especially to help connect workers to expanding centers of employment in the region.

There are many areas of potential expansion for RYDE both within and outside of Racine County, if funding were available. Increasing hours and frequency of routes, expanding service to parts of the county that have been less served such as the Village of Sturtevant, and improving regional service to surrounding counties are all opportunities for RYDE. In 2017, the system launched a commuter bus that better connects Racine, Milwaukee and Kenosha, and that serves the Kenosha METRA station to increase transportation to and from Chicago. Cross-county transit could further expand. SEWRPC has also identified the need for improved communication and planning between transit agencies in the region, expanded public transit service that "connects workers to jobs between counties," and more accessible transit through lower fares and increased frequency.[140]

Current capital needs include funding for ten new buses to replace those that have been in use since 2004; 12 years and 900,000 miles is considered to be the length of reliable service of a bus.[6] RYDE also needs a new maintenance and storage facility, and new software. With increased funding, RYDE could better meet the growing needs in Racine County and in Southeastern Wisconsin.

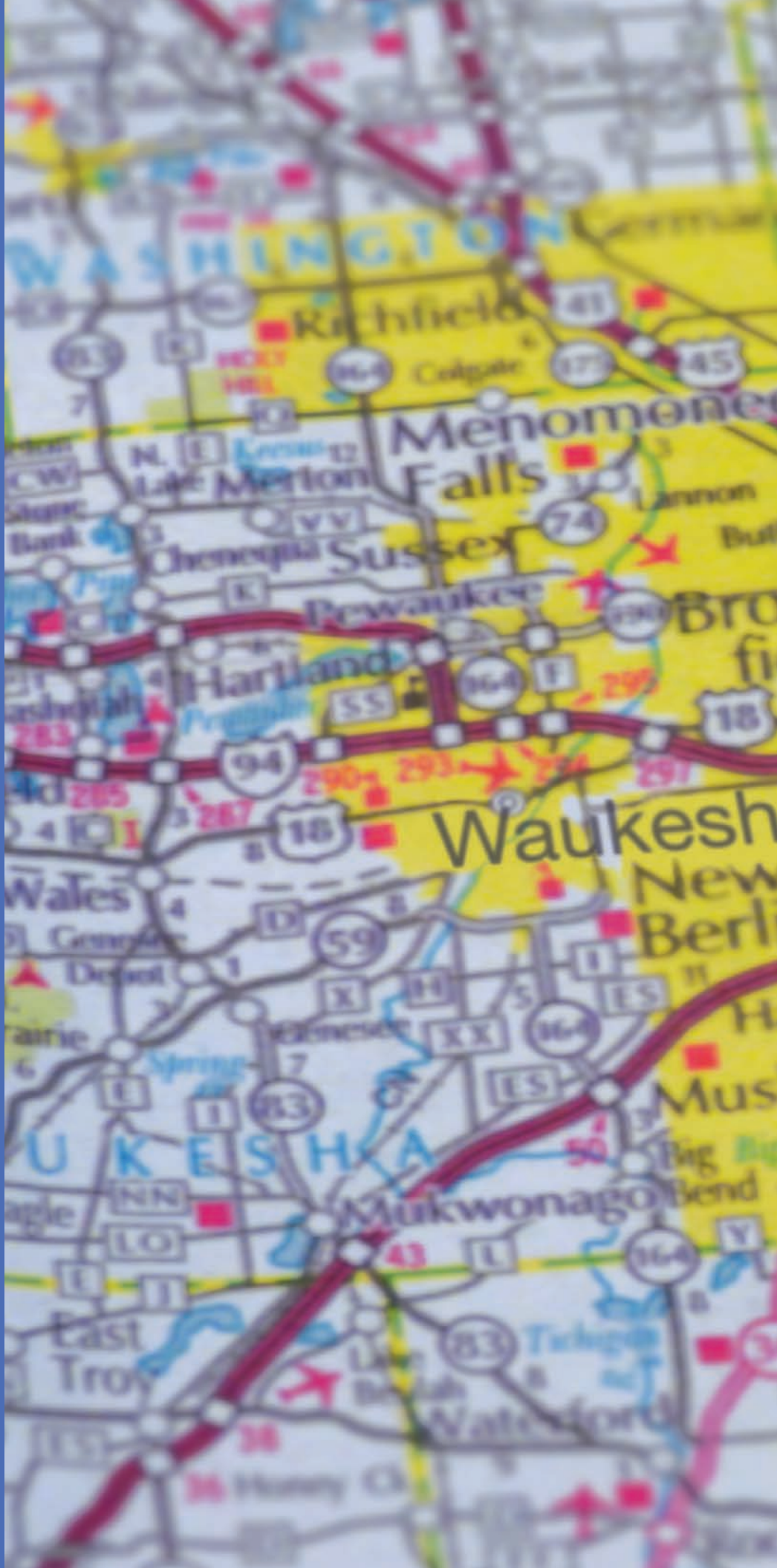
RYDE Funding Sources

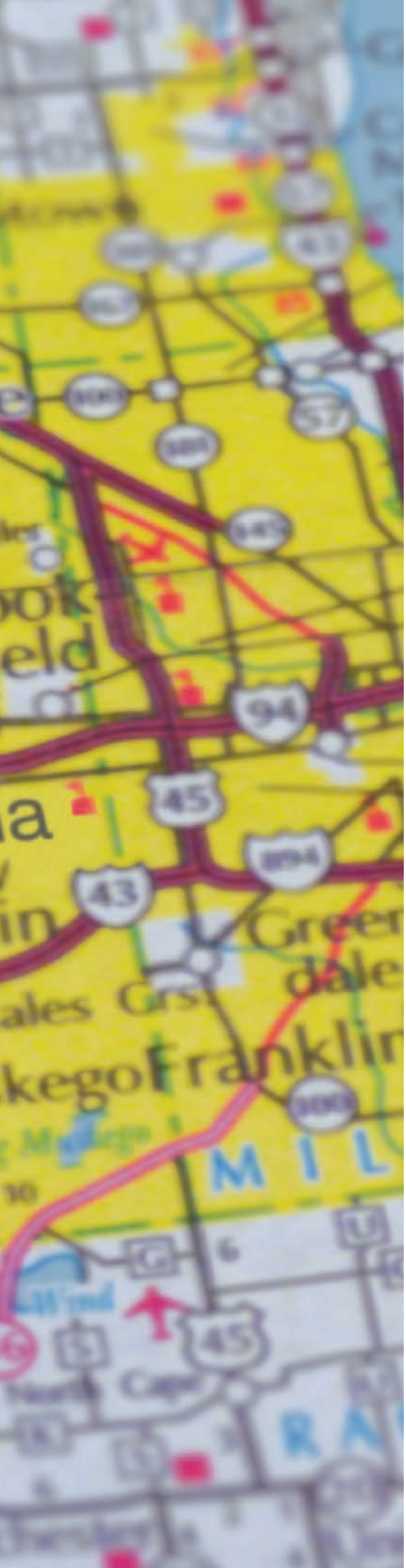
(2014)



"Several people have told me, over the years, that they 'would go crazy staying at home all day, every day if they didn't have the Taxi to get them out of the house, even for a short time.' We are a psychological lifeline as well as a healthy lifeline for doctor appointments, etc. It's important for seniors to remain mentally healthy and the Elmbrook Senior Taxi is happy to help make life a little easier for seniors."

– Lisa, Elmbrook Senior Taxi Driver
(Story collected by Sierra Club)





Waukesha

Waukesha Overview

Waukesha County is located in southeastern Wisconsin. Milwaukee County, the largest population center in the state, is east of Waukesha County. Waukesha County is composed of 37 cities, villages and townships. The population of the county in 2015 was approximately 396,488. The City of Waukesha is the largest municipality in the county, with a population of 71,489. The eastern third of the county is highly developed with a mix of residential, commercial and industrial areas in each political jurisdiction. The remainder of the county largely consists of exurban development.

Waukesha Transit Overview

The only public bus system in the county, Waukesha Metro Transit, is operated by the City of Waukesha, though there are several shared fare taxis and paratransit systems throughout the county. Waukesha Metro Transit operates throughout the City of Waukesha and into a few adjacent areas. It also administers contracted transit service for the county through Wisconsin Coach Lines and Milwaukee County Transit. Waukesha Metro also offers Metrolift, a demand-responsive transportation service, provided in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Waukesha Metro Transit provided more than 695,000 rides in 2015 and almost 11,000 paratransit trips.

Waukesha Metro Transit serves the City of Waukesha and the adjacent Bluemound Road strip connecting the Brookfield Square Shopping Mall in the City of Brookfield. The Metro also makes a trip into the Village of Pewaukee to Waukesha County Technical College.

Transit Access

Waukesha Metro services many popular destinations like inter-city bus stations, grocery stores, hospitals, healthcare facilities, libraries and educational institutions. This includes a route that specifically serves the University of Wisconsin Waukesha campus, and a route to Waukesha County Technical College (WCTC).[142] Brookfield Square is another popular central location for tourism serviced by Waukesha Metro Transit routes.

David, transit rider, Waukesha
Photography by Barbara Pfarr, SOPHIA

"I ride my bike — all year long — 8 blocks from my apartment to the transit center, put the bike on the bus, then bike another 1.8 miles from the Technical College to my workplace. If it wasn't for transit, I couldn't find employment. Transit is the key for work. I have my dream job now, but I couldn't get there if not for the bus."

While David is thankful for the bus, his story also demonstrates the many gaps in Waukesha County's transit system. While the system serves many frequented areas, there are still shortcomings. One of the most substantial barriers to riders are the lack of access to jobs through a truly regional transportation in Southeastern Wisconsin.

Within the county, there are many areas with available jobs that are not served by transit. Regionally, it is challenging and time-consuming for workers from Milwaukee to reach jobs in Waukesha. Milwaukee County and Waukesha County are served by separate transit systems, and there is currently only one transfer point between Waukesha Metro and Milwaukee County Metro Transit, at the Brookfield Square shopping

For many in the Waukesha area, the Waukesha Metro Transit system provides transit to those who do not have a car, or who cannot drive for other reasons. SEWRPC reports that the majority of riders use Metro Transit to access work, while others use it for shopping, school, healthcare, and other opportunities.[143]

In addition to Waukesha Metro, the Waukesha County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) shared fare taxi services and Interfaith Caregiving Network also offer transportation in the county for people with disabilities and low-income individuals. ARDC's services are typically provided to those over 65 or on disability, for medical appointments, shopping, employment and other personal needs. These programs are essential, especially in the more rural parts of Waukesha County that do not have the population density to support a bus system.

Transportation Barriers

For those who do not have cars or cannot afford cars in the City of Waukesha, transit has been vital. David describes the important role that transit has played in his life and identifies some of the barriers:

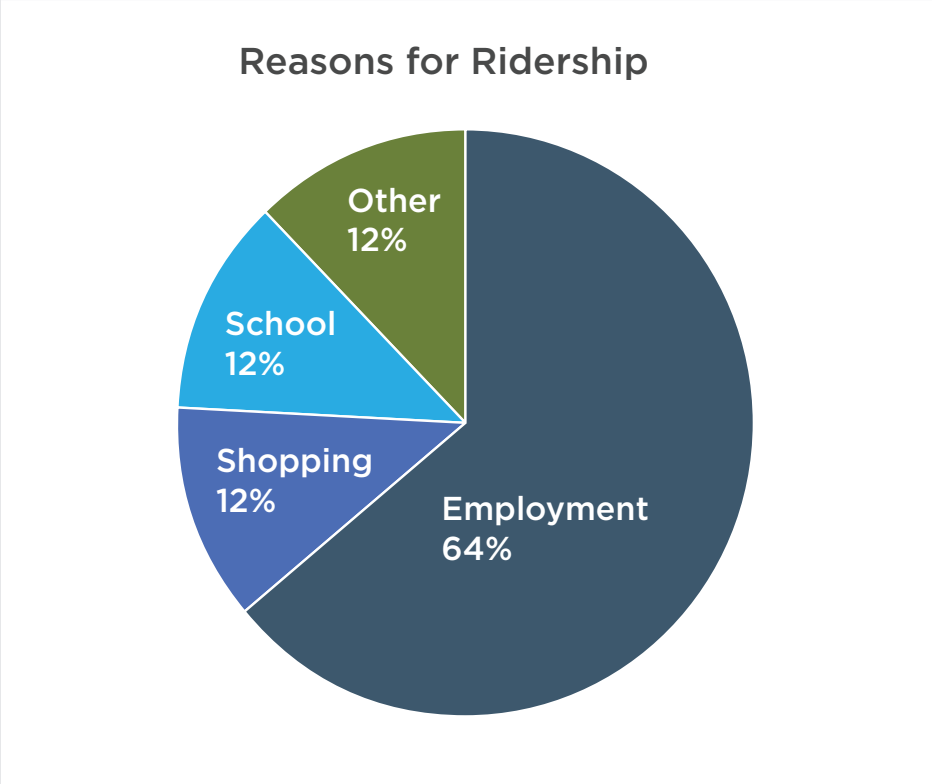
Car Ownership	Income	Age
2.1% without 22.2% with one	Waukesha County median household income: $96.4k City of Waukesha median household income: $56.8k Median income by race: White: $57.2k Asian/Pacific Islander: $112.2k Black: $19.6k Hispanic and Latinx: $48.7k Native American: $53.1k	65+ 10.9% 40-64 31.1% 22-39 28.0% 18-21 6.8% 0-17 23.1%

mall where the MCTS Gold Line ends. For Milwaukee residents who may not have reliable transportation, the lack of transit access to these industrial parks can make working there challenging, if not impossible.

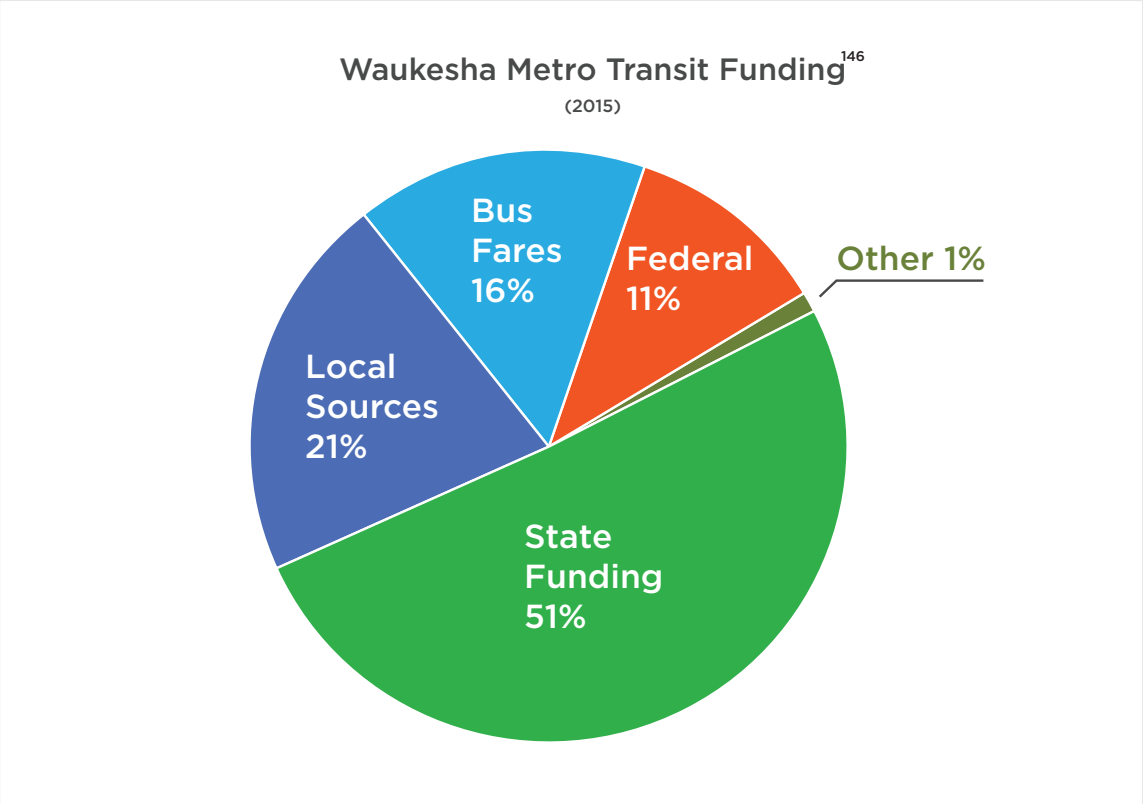
An aging population is another challenge that the City and County of Waukesha need to plan for, as the number of seniors is set to double between 2015 and 2025. As the population ages, health issues will often preclude driving an automobile. Having access to public transportation can help seniors live independently and in their own homes longer. Public transit and paratransit needs will increase as the number of seniors increases.

The availability of shared fare taxis and paratransit service helps address this need, especially in the more rural parts of the county. However, these services are often challenging to book because of a lack of volunteer or paid drivers, or because of a shortage of vehicles. Many of the shared fare taxis require that clients book a ride several days in advance, forcing riders to plan grocery shopping or health care visits around their transportation options rather than the other way around. This mix of private not-for-profit taxis and subsidized paratransit has led to a lack of coordination between various transportation options and parts of the county, especially in the southern and western sections with service gaps.[144]

Furthermore, due to the many different taxi and paratransit options, riders have reported being confused about whom to call for service in various locations across the county. This has led to the Waukesha County "Find-A-Ride" project that is in the process of creating a "one-click" center to help anyone in Waukesha County locate the correct paratransit or not-for-profit



Schedule/ Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Fleet: Weekdays: 5:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m. Saturday: 8:15 a.m. - 9:15 p.m. Sunday: 9:15 a.m. - 7:15 p.m.	Out of state busses departing from Milwaukee which stop in Waukesha reflect Milwaukee fares. Express routes operated by Wisconsin Coach Lines and funded locally by Waukesha County have a separate fare structure and connect bring riders outside of Waukesha Metro Transit's typical service area and to Goerkes Corners, Meadowbrook Transit Station, and Big Bend Park-Ride.	Single Ride: $2.00 Adults $1.25 Youth $1.00 Senior/Disabled Day Pass: $5.00 10-Ride Pass: $18.00 Adult $12.00 Youth $10.00 Senior/Disabled 31-Day Pass: $46.00 Adult $30.00 Youth $35.00 Senior/Disabled Summer Youth Pass: $35.00	Metrolift is available for those who meet ADA requirements. The Metrolift cash fare is $4 for a one-way trip.	All are equipped with wheelchair lifts, though not all stops allow for it to be used.



taxi option for their trip. The project has received federal funding and is supported by the non-profit ERAs Senior Network.[145] While this coordinated website will help address some of the confusion, the strain on the taxi and paratransit services and gaps in service territory will persist.

Funding and Opportunities to Expand Service

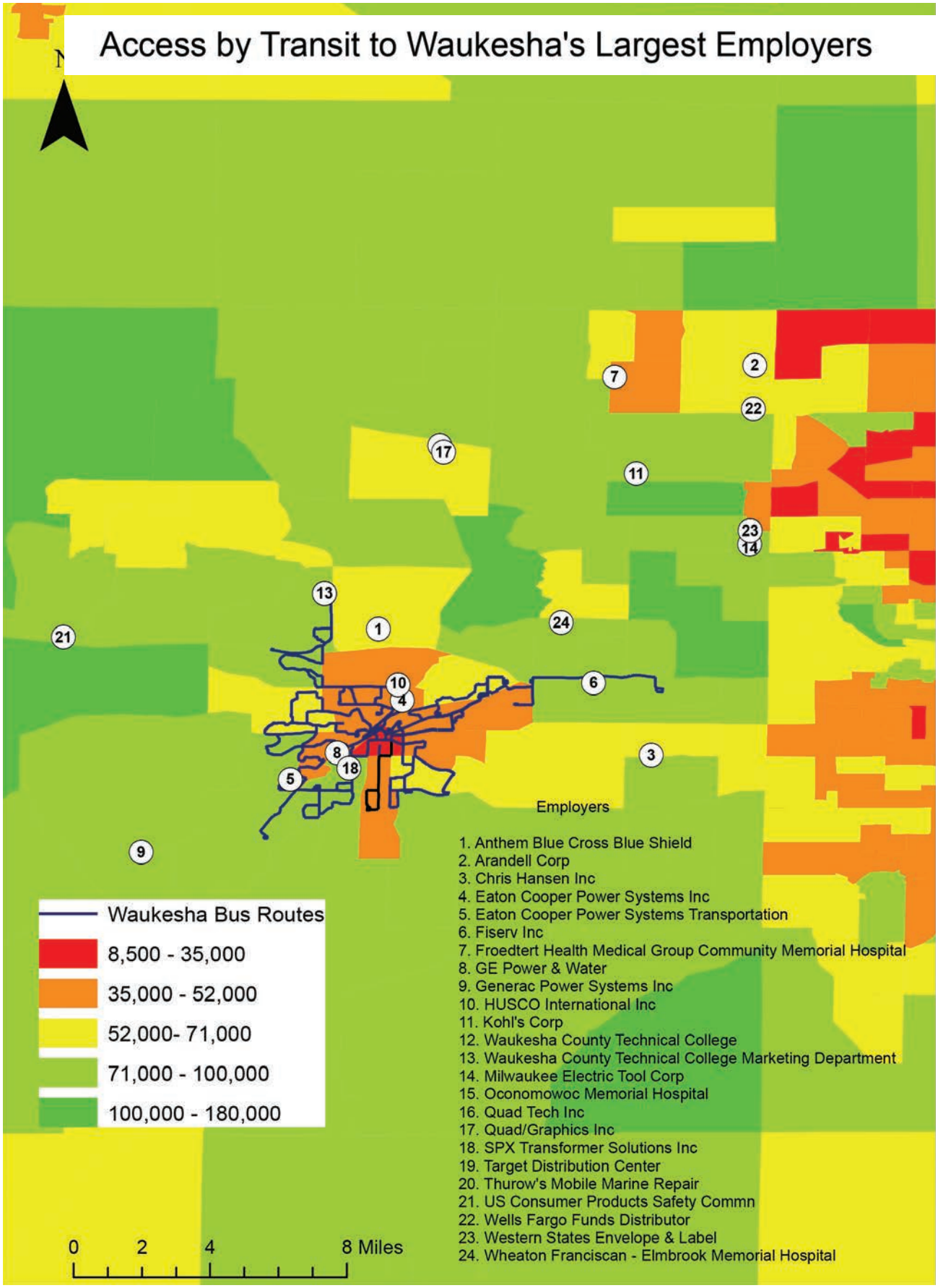
There are significant opportunities for Waukesha's transit systems to improve. Two of the most pressing needs are, first, providing workers with access to available jobs in Waukesha County, and, second, giving seniors who are unable to drive access to the healthcare and opportunities they want and need to remain independent. Both problems could be addressed by increasing transit funding and through better regional collaboration.

While the unemployment levels in neighboring Milwaukee County are high, thousands of jobs are available in Waukesha County. Currently, Milwaukee County Transit provides a bus route from Milwaukee County into an industrial park area of New Berlin in the southeastern quadrant of Waukesha County; unfortunately, funding for these lines ends on January 1, 2018, and the lines will be closed. Investing in service from Milwaukee County should be vital, as it provides opportunities to connect workers to jobs. Doing so would help break down economic and racial inequities in the region.

In addition to better regional collaboration and expansions of bus routes, there are many opportunities for shared fare taxis and paratransit services to better meet the needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities, whether in the City of Waukesha or in rural parts of the county. The Find-A-Ride Network is a step in the right direction, but there is more that can be done. Increasing hours and service territory for these services or supporting a public shuttle system are two possible ways to better serve the more rural areas of the county.

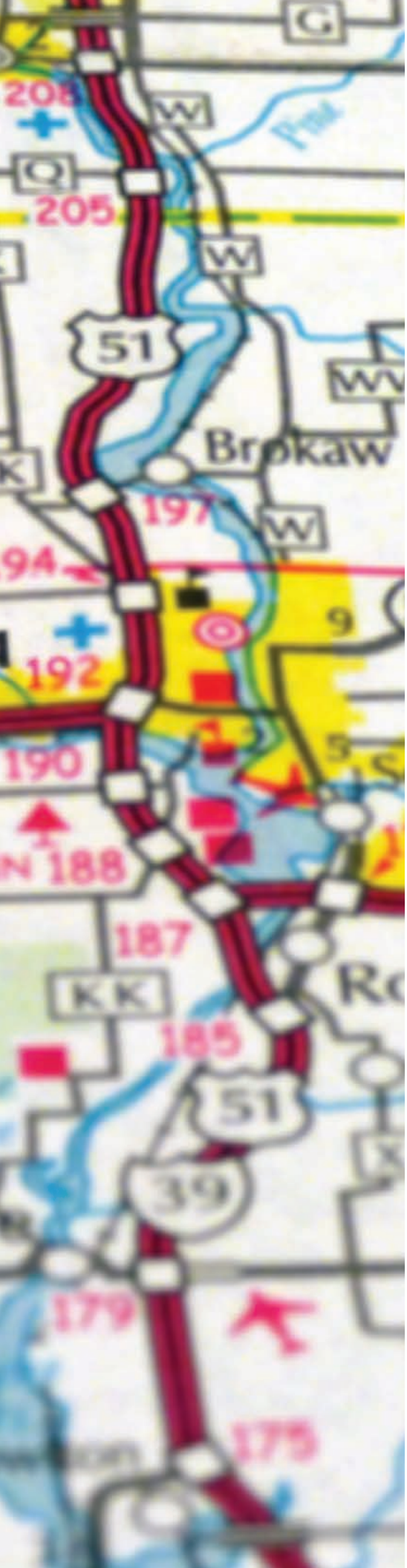
Southeastern Wisconsin is the largest metropolitan area in the United States without a Regional Transportation Authority to address transportation needs, funding gaps, and transit planning. An RTA could be a platform for much-needed coordination.

While the City of Waukesha provides basic service in the immediate area of the city with a tight budget, the remainder of the county has very limited services. Many employers have trouble finding employees, especially in lower-paying positions, due to a lack of transportation access to their jobs, and many seniors are being left behind, especially in rural areas of the county. Regional transportation planning, public shuttles, taxis, and increased coordination between shared fare taxis are all potential areas of improvement.


Access by Transit to Waukesha's Largest Employers
Waukesha Bus Routes
8,500 - 35,000
35,000 - 52,000
52,000- 71,000
71,000 - 100,000
100,000 - 180,000
0 2 4 8 Miles
Employers
1. Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield
2. Arandell Corp
3. Chris Hansen Inc
4. Eaton Cooper Power Systems Inc
5. Eaton Cooper Power Systems Transportation
6. Fiserv Inc
7. Froedtert Health Medical Group Community Memorial Hospital
8. GE Power & Water
9. Generac Power Systems Inc
10. HUSCO International Inc
11. Kohl's Corp
12. Waukesha County Technical College
13. Waukesha County Technical College Marketing Department
14. Milwaukee Electric Tool Corp
15. Oconomowoc Memorial Hospital
16. Quad Tech Inc
17. Quad/Graphics Inc
18. SPX Transformer Solutions Inc
19. Target Distribution Center
20. Thurow's Mobile Marine Repair
21. US Consumer Products Safety Commn
22. Wells Fargo Funds Distributor
23. Western States Envelope & Label
24. Wheaton Franciscan - Elmbrook Memorial Hospital

"Public transportation is my car key to independence."

- Kathi, Wausau



Wausau

Wausau Overview

The city of Wausau is located in north-central Marathon County. It is the largest city in the county, with a population of about 39,000. The city is 83.7 percent white, 1.4 percent African American, 11.1 percent Asian/Pacific Islander and less than 1 percent Native American. Hmong Americans are the second largest ethnic group in the city, after non-Latinx white residents.[147] When compared to the rest of Marathon County, Wausau has a higher percent of racial and ethnic minorities, seniors, and people living below the poverty line.[148]

Beyond available census data, Marathon County also completes a biannual report called the LIFE Report that "provides a wide spectrum of information and data depicting the quality of life in Wausau and Marathon County."[149] A history of the county's changing demographics is recorded through the ten LIFE Reports that have been published since 1996. For example, the percent of People of Color living in the county more than doubled from 4.5 percent in 1996 to 10.4 percent in 2013. This shift is even more striking when viewed through school enrollments, where cultural diversity significantly outpaces county percentages. The county has been aging steadily over the past 20 years, and it is projected that this trend will continue. By 2035, seniors will make up almost a quarter of the county's population. Additionally, the county is seeing an increase in the number of families living in poverty, from 4.3 percent in 2000 to 6.9 percent in 2013.[150]

Metro Ride 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.

> **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**

Transit Access

Currently, Metro Ride provides transit service within Wausau city limits. In the past, service was provided to the nearby Village of Weston, Village of Rothschild and City of Schofield, but this was discontinued in 2015. The fixed routes run at 30-minute intervals Monday through Friday. The system does not run on nights or weekends.

Metro Ride partners with Jefferson Lines to connect Wausau riders to Minneapolis, Green Bay, and Milwaukee. Additionally, Metro Ride permits Lamers Bus Lines to use the Metro Ride facility for boarding; Lamers connects Wausau riders to Madison and Milwaukee, with several stops along the way.

Transportation 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.[151] Concerns voiced by Wausau residents center around the lack of accessibility to where jobs are in the area. Ron Alexander, a local, expresses this concern:

Car Ownership	Income	Age
3.5% without a vehicle	City of Wausau median household income: $41.8k	65+ 16.4%
26.8% with one vehicle	White: $44.6k	40-64 31.1%
	Asian/Pacific Islander: $41.4k	22-39 23.9%
	Black: $15.6k	8-21 5.1%
	Hispanic or Latinx: $22.8k	0-17 23.5%
	Native American: $20.0k	

Photography by Cassie Steiner

"I am not a bus rider but realize I am just an accident away from relying on others for transportation or using public transportation. My experiences are of an advocate. A bus provides regular transportation on specific routes so people can get to work, appointments, shopping, leisure and recreation activities. I would like to see expanded bus service to Weston, Schofield, Rothschild, Kronenwetter and Rib Mountain; including Saturday and Sunday service. It has been pointed out to me that a majority of jobs available in the greater Wausau area are off the bus route. 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. I believe that this is shortsighted and a major impediment in seriously addressing the mounting poverty issue. We need to do better!"

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. Only 64 percent of the employees who work in Marathon County live within the county.[152] Currently, many important destinations in the urban area cannot be reached by bus because transit services are not available outside of the city.

Financial challenges for riders also present a barrier. While reduced fares are available for seniors and persons with disabilities, there are no accommodations made for people with low or fixed incomes.

Schedule/Frequency	Special Service	Fares	Paratransit	Accessibility
Seven fixed routes Weekdays: 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Service not available on weekends or some holidays.	Partners with Jefferson Lines to connect with a network of intercity routes. During the school year, ten express routes are offered. They are planned to bring high school students to school without needing a transfer downtown.	Single Ride: $1.75 Adults $1.50 Youth $0.85 Seniors/Disabled 10 Ride Tokens: $10.00 Adults $8.50 Youth Monthly Pass: $38.00 Adults $19.00 Youth and Seniors/Disabled	Metro Ride Paratransit Service is available for those who meet ADA requirements.	All have wheelchair ramps or lifts. Every bus is equipped with bike racks.

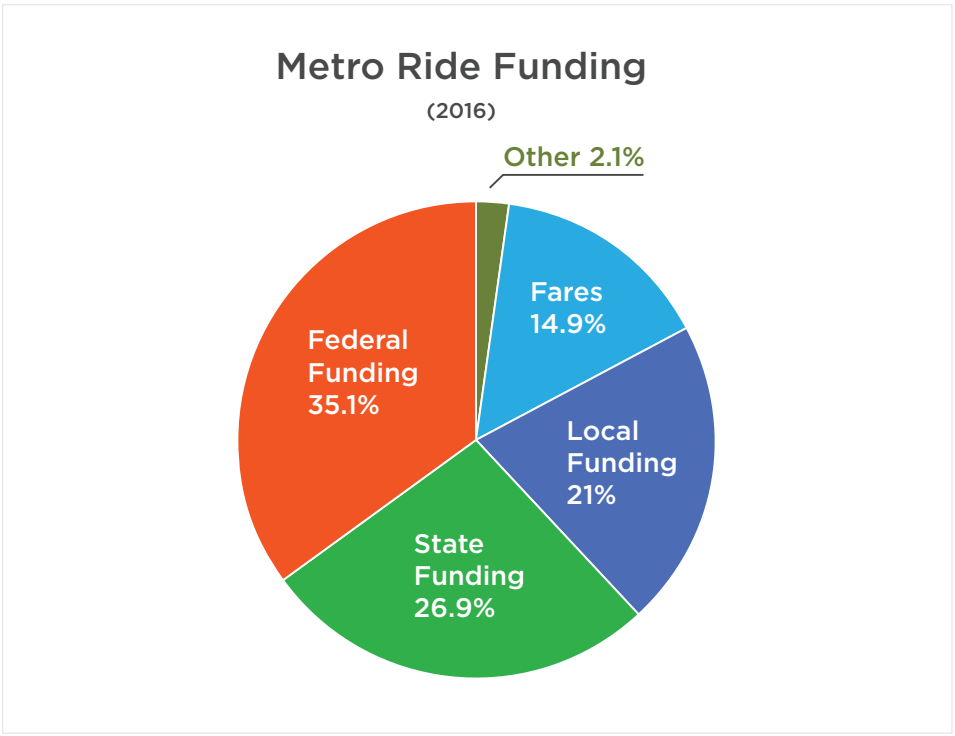
Funding[153] and Opportunities to Expand Services

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.[154] However, ridership within the service territory that was not cut has remained steady.[155]

Not only did cuts to service territory negatively impact riders, but they also heavily influenced the system's budget. Most city, regional and mobility plans conducted for the area identify declining funding as one of the largest barriers to serving riders. Metro Ride's 2016 Budget Report states that "service cuts and fare increases have diminished transit affordability and usefulness, especially for those who need it most," and "current service levels are insufficient to meet the needs of retiring Baby Boomers, or to attract young adults to live and work in the Wausau metro area."[149] Re-establishing service to surrounding municipalities, increasing the hours of transit service on weekdays and starting service on weekends would dramatically increase the quality of service for Metro Ride's users.

Another area for potential expansion is the Town of Rib Mountain. The 2017 City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan states:

> ***The most recent plan for Metro Ride was prepared in 2012. This plan found that there is demand for service to Rib Mountain, but the Town of Rib Mountain has been unwilling to financially support a route... The plan states the most significant opportunities were implementing new***



Photography by David Loken

services to Rib Mountain Drive... considering the need for evening services to improve access to employment and shopping, and that these expansions would have a positive impact on ridership even on the least productive routes.[157]

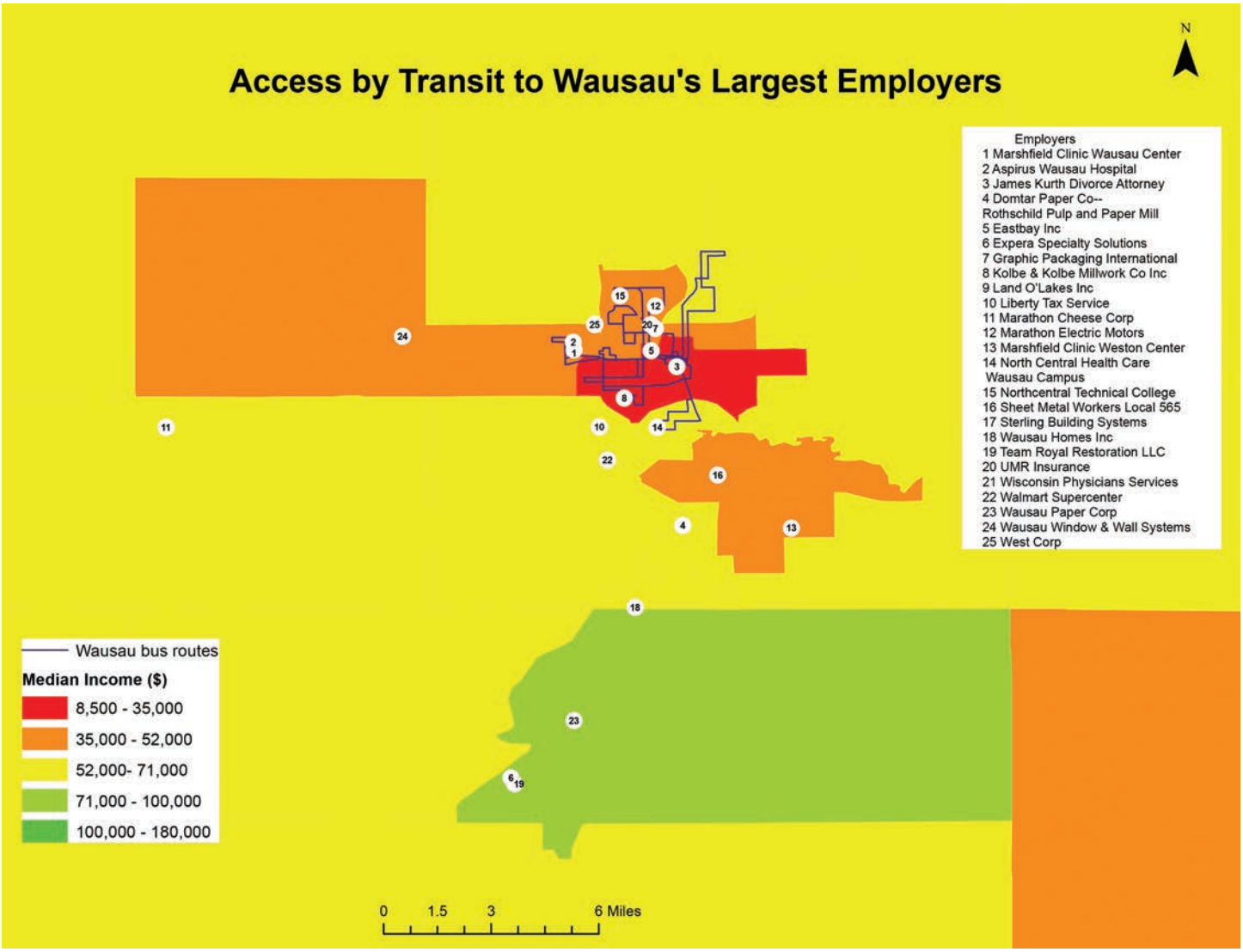
Without service to Weston and other surrounding communities, an expansion to Rib Mountain may provide a much-needed increase in ridership.

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. The Long Range Plan explains:

The creation of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) would be an excellent organizational strategy for developing a stable funding source. Formation of an RTA requires state legislation and has been a political and highly contentious issue in Wisconsin but offers the best solution for developing both a sustainable plan as well as a truly regional system. The RTA would create the ability to have new funding streams and then a financially solid regional transit system.[158]

Indeed, funding transit in Wausau and the surrounding region will be vital to meeting the needs of riders.

Marathon County is decreasing public transportation service at a time when the need for such services is increasing. The county must address the growing need for new and innovative transportation options that connect people where they live and work.



Photography by Emma Searles

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Public transit plays a vital role in the lives of many Wisconsinites, connecting people of all ages, incomes and abilities to the places they need to and want to go. And yet, policymakers are failing to make necessary investments in this essential component of Wisconsin's transportation system. As the authors of this report conducted interviews with transit riders and planners and evaluated census, ridership and budget data, it was hard to miss a number of recurring themes across Wisconsin's transit systems, both related to transportation barriers and possible solutions.

Communities' transportation challenges include meeting an increasing demand for public transit due to the state's aging population; managing job growth in exurban areas that are not adequately served by transit systems; confronting historic inequities related to race and income; accounting for shifting transportation preferences among students and young adult Wisconsinites; and overcoming political barriers to increased funding and regional transportation collaboration.

Meanwhile, the solutions that would help communities address 21st-century transportation needs were similar across the board as well. Regional collaboration through RTAs, increased funding to municipalities seeking to expand transit service or make capital improvements, and creative planning to improve service to and from job hubs and throughout rural areas – including through services like shared-ride taxis or shuttles – would improve quality of life for Wisconsinites in cities, towns, and counties around the state.

Public transit plays crucial economic and societal roles in Wisconsin communities – but in order to make the most of the broad benefits of effective public transportation, federal, state and local leaders must adequately fund it. In many cases, local planning bodies have already identified solutions to improve transit systems to better serve their communities; leaders would therefore also do well to evaluate and more readily implement transit-related recommendations made by planning commissions.

Transit investment is urgently needed to address economic and workforce development issues, mitigate inequities in public health outcomes, improve environmental sustainability and more, both in urban and rural areas of Wisconsin. Regional Transportation Authorities or regional transit districts are essential to growing regional economies and addressing community needs.

REFERENCES

1. David. (2016). Transit Story Form. (SOPHIA, Interviewer)
2. Josh. (2016). Transit Story Form. (ESTHER, Interviewer)
3. Frank. (2016). Transit Story Form. (Sierra Club)
4. State of Wisconsin Department of Revenue. (n.d.). *Regional Transit Authority Fee.* Retrieved December 2016, from https://www.revenue.wi.gov/Pages/FAQS/pcs-rtafee.aspx
5. "Wisconsin Department of Health Services. (2017, May). *Projected Population Ages 60 and Older 2015-2040 Maps.* (P01803).
6. Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources. (2015). *"Testimony for information relating to AB21/SB21 ".* Retrieved July 20, 2018 from file:///C:/Users/cassa/Downloads/GWAARTranspInfoTestimony2015rev%20(1).pdf.
7. Wisconsin Department of Health Services. (n.d.). *Demographics of Aging in Wisconsin.* Retrieved January 17, 2017, from https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/demographics.htm
8. Pawasarat, J. (2005). *"The Driver License Status of the Voting Age Population in Wisconsin ".* University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Namekegon Transit. (n.d.). *ADA Accommodations* . Retrieved from Namekagon Transit: https://www.namekagontransit.com/ada/
12. Ibid.
13. Federal Transit Administration. (2014). *Belle Urban System - Racine (The Bus): 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50006.pdf
14. Federal Transit Administration. (2014). *Belle Urban System - Racine (The Bus): 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50006.pdf
15. Wisconsin Department of Transportation. (n.d.). 2014-2015 *Transportation Budget Trends.*
16. Jakowitsch, N., & Ernst, M. (2004). Just Transportation. In R. D. Bullard, G. S. Johnson, & A. O. Torres, *Highway Robberty: Transportation Racism & New Routes to Equity* (pp. 161-178). Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press.
17. Ibid.
18. WISPIRG Foundation. (2014). *Fork In The Road.*
19. Jackson, K. T. (2008). Crabgrass Frontier: *The Suburbanization of the United States.* Oxford University Press.
20. Meisler, S. (1990, July 16). Building Crisis: Poverty in America. *Los Angeles Times.*
21. *Milwaukee Highways: North-South Freeways*. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2016, from Wisconsin Highways: http://www.wisconsin-highways.org/milwaukee/northsouth.html
22. Grengs, J. (2013, March). Nonwork Accessibility as a Social Equity Indicator. *International Journal of Sustainable Transportation,* 9(1), 1-14.
23. Sanchez, T. W., Stolz, R., & Ma, J. S. (2003). *Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities.* The Civil Rights Project and the Center for Community Change.
24. Ibid.
25. Exec. Order No. 12898, 3 CFR 859 (1994). (n.d.).
26. Sanchez, T. W., Stolz, R., & Ma, J. S. (2003). *Moving to Equity: Addressing Inequitable Effects of Transportation Policies on Minorities.* The Civil Rights Project and the Center for Community Change.
27. *Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) et al. v. Mark Gottlieb et al.,* Case No. 12-C-0556, United States District Court Western District of Wisconsin (2013). (n.d.).
28. Ibid.
29. Mulvany, L. (2014, May 19). State to spend $13.5 million on transit to settle Zoo Interchange suit. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.*
30. Sargent, M. (2015, May 11). Highway Trust Fund Basics: A Primer on Federal Surface Transportation Spending. *Backgrounder* (3014).
31. Congressional Research Service. (2016). *Surface Transportation Funding and Programs Under the FAST Act.*
32. Congressional Budget Office (2016, September 9). *Status of the Highway Trust Fund Based on CBO's August 2016 Baseline.* Retrieved from https://www.cbo.gov/publication/52307. Accessed 7/20/2018.
33. Ibid.
34. Sargent, M. (2015, May 11). Highway Trust Fund Basics: A Primer on Federal Surface Transportation Spending. *Backgrounder* (3014).
35. Federal Highway Administration. (2017). *A Guide To Federal-Aid Programs And Projects. U.S. Department of Transportation.*
36. Drenkard, S. (2017, January 27). State Gasoline Tax Rates in 2017 . (Tax Foundation) Retrieved from https://taxfoundation.org/state-gasoline-tax-rates-2017/. See also Hauer, S. (2016, July 20). *Walker: 'For decades, the state's gas tax has been among the highest in the nation'.* Retrieved from PolitiFact: http://www.politifact.com/wisconsin/statements/2016/jul/20/scott-walker/walker-decades-states-gas-tax-has-been-among-highe/
37. Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "2014-2015 Transportation Budget Trends," 2016.
38. Ibid.
39. Division of Executive Budget and Finance. (2016). *Agency Budget Requests And Revenue Estimates* (2017-2019). Wisconsin Department of Administration, Madison, Wisconsin.
40. Ibid.
41. Federal Transit Administration. (n.d.). *NTD Transit Agency Profiles* . Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/transit-agency-profiles
42. Christian, J., Moua, P. S., & Vogeler, I. (2009). The Cultural Landscape of the Hmong in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. *Wisconsin Geographer,* 23, 3-19.
43. 2014). Eau Claire Transit Development Plan. SRF Consulting Group.
44. Ibid.
45. "City of Eau Claire Community Services. (n.d.). *Maps & Schedules.* Retrieved from City of Eau Claire, Wisconsin: http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/transit/maps-schedules
46. (2014). Eau Claire Transit Development Plan. SRF Consulting Group.
47. United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). QuickFacts: *Altoona City, Wisconsin; Eau Claire County, Wisconsin.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/altoonacitywisconsin,eauclairecountywisconsin/PST045216
48. (2014). Eau Claire Transit Development Plan. SRF Consulting Group.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. (2014). Eau Claire Transit Development Plan. SRF Consulting Group.

52. Ibid.

53. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2009). *Valley Transit Development Plan.* Retrieved from http://fcompo.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ValleyTransitTDP2009.pdf

54. Ibid.

55. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Household Income in Menasha, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from Statistical Atlas: https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Menasha/Household-Income

56. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Age and Sex in Kimberly, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Kimberly/Age-and-Sex#figure/age-and-sex

57. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2009). *Valley Transit Development Plan.* Retrieved from http://fcompo.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ValleyTransitTDP2009.pdf

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. City of Appleton. (2012). *Valley Transit: Connecting the Fox Cities*. Retrieved from http://www.appleton.org/home/showdocument?id=1454

61. Federal Transit Administration. (2007). *Useful Life of Transit Buses and Vans.* U.S. Department of Transportation.

62. City of Appleton. (2014). *Valley Transit 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50001.pdf

63. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2015). *Appleton (Fox Cities) Transportation Management Area: Long Range Transportation / Land Use Plan Appleton (Fox Cities) Urbanized Area.* Retrieved from http://www.ecwrpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2015-2050-FC-LRTP.pdf

64. East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2009). *Valley Transit Development Plan.* Retrieved from http://fcompo.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ValleyTransitTDP2009.pdf

65. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Population of Hayward, Wisconsin* . (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from Statistical AtlasStatistical Atlas: https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Hayward/Population

66. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Community Facts: Hayward town, Sawyer County, Wisconsin.* Retrieved from American Fact Finder: https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/place/Hayward town, Sawyer County, Wisconsin/ALL

67. American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation. (2017, February 15). *February 19-26, 2017 Proclaimed American Birkebeiner Week in the State of Wisconsin.* Retrieved from http://www.birkie.com/2017/02/american-birkebeiner-week-proclamation/

68. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Community Facts: Hayward town, Sawyer County, Wisconsin.* Retrieved from American Fact Finder: https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/place/Hayward town, Sawyer County, Wisconsin/ALL

69. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Race and Ethnicity in Hayward, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Hayward/Race-and-Ethnicity

70. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Household Income in Hayward, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Hayward/Household-Income

71. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Age and Sex in Hayward, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Hayward/Age-and-Sex

72. Kohler, R. (2016, March 11). Four Seasons - Travel with Namekagon Transit: Bus system makes transportation easy in Sawyer County. *Sawyer County Record.*

73. Namekegon Transit. (n.d.). ADA *Accommodations* . Retrieved from Namekagon Transit: https://www.namekagontransit.com/ada/

74. Namekagon Transit. (n.d.). *Need To Know Rider Information.* Retrieved from Namekagon Transit: https://www.namekagontransit.com/need-to-know-rider-information/

75. The City of La Crosse Wisconsin . (n.d.). *Municipal Transit (MTU).* Retrieved from https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/mtu

76. Ibid.

77. La Crosse Municipal Transit Authority. (n.d.). *MTU Go Brochure.* Retrieved from https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/filestorage/407/459/2285/MTU_GO_brochure.pdf

78. The City of La Crosse, Wisconsin. (n.d.). *Specialized Service for Disabled Persons.* Retrieved from https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/content/407/459/2317/default.aspx

79. Federal Transit Administration. (2016, March 16). *LaCrosse Regional Transit Center.* (U.S. Department of Transportation) Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/about/regional-offices/region-5/la-crosse-regional-transit-center

80. Aging and Disability Resource Center of La Crosse County. (n.d.). *Transportation: La Crosse County Minibus.* Retrieved from http://www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/adrc/minibus.asp

81. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Community Facts: La Crosse city, Wisconsin.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/lacrossecitywisconsin/PST045217

82. Couleecap. (n.d.). *Transportation Assistance.* (Couleecap Inc.) Retrieved from http://www.couleecap.org/trans.html

83. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *All sectors: Geographic Area Series: Economy-Wide Key Statistics: 2012.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ECN/2012_US/00A1/E600000US5506340775

84. See for example Duranton, G., & Turner, M.A. (2011). "The Fundamental Law of Road Congestion: Evidence from US Cities," *American Economic Review*, DOI: 10.1257/aer.101.6.2616.

85. Tyser, R., & Giese, M. (2017, January 10). Let's talk about transportation funding. *La Crosse Tribune.*

86. Federal Transit Administration. (n.d.). *LaCrosse Municipal Transit Utility (La Crosse MTU) 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50004.pdf

87. La Crosse Area Planning Committee. (2013). *Coulee Vision 2050 Transit Recommendations.* Retrieved from Coulee Vision 2050: http://www.lapc.org/content/plans/Coulee%20Vision%202050/Coulee%20Vsion%20Transit.htm

88. Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission. (2017, January). *Commuter Bus Service Feasibility Study: Arcadia to La Crosse and Tomah to La Crosse.* Retrieved from http://www.lapc.org/Content/Plans/Plan%20documents/SMRT/Commuter%20%20Feasibility%20Study%20011017.pdf

89. La Crosse Area Planning Committee. (2013). *Coulee Vision 2050 Transit Recommendations.* Retrieved from Coulee Vision 2050: http://www.lapc.org/content/plans/Coulee%20Vision%202050/Coulee%20Vsion%20Transit.htm

90. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *QuickFacts: Madison city, Wisconsin.* Retrieved May 19, 2016, from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/madisoncitywisconsin/LND110210

91. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Race and Ethnicity in the Madison Area, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/metro-area/Wisconsin/Madison/Race-and-Ethnicity

92. "U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *QuickFacts: Madison city, Wisconsin.* Retrieved May 19, 2016, from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/madisoncitywisconsin/LND110210

93. Metro Transit. (n.d.). *City of Madison Metro Transit.* Retrieved from

http://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/

94. Cechvala, M. (2017, January 19). (C. Steiner, Interviewer)

95. Kate. (2016). Transit Story Form. Last name omitted by request.

96. Mosiman, D. (2013, August 23). Madison extends bus service to Owl Creek, Grandview Commons neighborhoods. *Wisconsin State Journal.*

97. Cechvala, M. (2017, January 19). (C. Steiner, Interviewer)

98. Mosiman, D. (2013, August 23). Madison extends bus service to Owl Creek, Grandview Commons neighborhoods. *Wisconsin State Journal.*

99. Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. (2013). *Race to Equity: A Baseline Report on the State of Racial Disparities in Dane County.*

100. Ibid.

101. Brinnan. (2016). Transit Story Form. Last name omitted by request.

102. City of Madison Metro Transit. (n.d.). *Ride Guide, 2017-2018.* Retrieved from http://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/schedules/RideGuide/rideGuide.pdf

103. Jess, D. (2017, January 19). (C. Steiner, Interviewer)

104. Cechvala, M. (2017, January 19). (C. Steiner, Interviewer)

105. YWCA Madison. (n.d.). *YWCA Madison.* Retrieved June 27, 2017, from http://www.ywcamadison.org/

106. Larson, A. (2017, January 19). (C. Steiner, Interviewer)

107. City of Madison Metro Transit. (n.d.). *Metro Transit: 2015 Annual Report.* Retrieved from http://www.cityofmadison.com/metro/annualreports/2015.pdf

108. Cechvala, M. (2017, January 19). (C. Steiner, Interviewer)

109. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). QuickFacts: *Milwaukee city, Wisconsin.* Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/milwaukeecitywisconsin/PST045217

110. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Employment Status in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Milwaukee/Employment-Status

111. Ibid.

112. Milwaukee County. (n.d.). *Milwaukee County Transit System: 2014 Service Statistics.* Retrieved from https://www.ridemcts.com/getattachment/About-MCTS/2014-MCTS-Annual-Report.pdf?lang=en-US

113. Milwaukee County Transit System. (n.d.). *Who is MCTS?.* Retrieved from https://www.ridemcts.com/about-mcts

114. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Selected Economic Characteristics: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/DP03/0100000US

115. Milwaukee County. (n.d.). *Milwaukee County Transit System: 2014 Service Statistics.* Retrieved from https://www.ridemcts.com/getattachment/About-MCTS/2014-MCTS-Annual-Report.pdf?lang=en-US

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. Milwaukee County Transit System. (n.d.). *Who is MCTS?.* Retrieved from https://www.ridemcts.com/about-mcts

119. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Selected Economic Characteristics: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/DP03/0100000US

120. Levine, M. V. (2013). *Perspectives on the Current State of The Milwaukee Economy.* University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Economic Development. Wisconsin Voices.

121. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Selected Economic Characteristics: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/table/1.0/en/ACS/15_5YR/DP03/0100000US

122. Public Policy Forum. (2013, December). *Getting to Work: Opportunities and obstacles to improving transit service to suburban Milwaukee job hubs.* Retrieved from https://publicpolicyforum.org/research/getting-work-opportunities-and-obstacles-improving-transit-service-suburban-milwaukee-job

123. Ibid.

124. Federal Transit Administration. (2014). *Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50008.pdf

125. Public Policy Forum. (2008, May 5). *Milwaukee County's Transit Crisis.* Retrieved from https://publicpolicyforum.org/blog/milwaukee-countys-transit-crisis

126. Milwaukee County Transit System. (2017). *DOT Transit Budget.* Retrieved from http://county.milwaukee.gov/ImageLibrary/Groups/cntyDAS/PSB/Budgets/2017-Budget-/5600-DOT-Transit.pdf

127. Peterangelo, J. (2015). *Picking Up the Pace: An analysis of best practices for improving bus speeds and their potential applicability to Milwaukee.* Public Policy Forum.

128. Peterangelo, J., Carlson, V., & Henken, R. (2013). *Getting to Work: Opportunities and obstacles to improving transit service to suburban Milwaukee job hubs.* Public Policy Forum. Retrieved from https://publicpolicyforum.org/research/getting-work-opportunities-and-obstacles-improving-transit-service-suburban-milwaukee-job

129. Milwaukee County. (2017). *East-West Bus Rapid Transit.* Retrieved from http://www.eastwestbrt.com/

130. Statistical Atlas. (n.d.). *Overview of Racine, Wisconsin.* (Cedar Lake Ventures, Inc.) Retrieved from https://statisticalatlas.com/place/Wisconsin/Racine/Overview

131. City of Racine. (n.d.). *Racine Transit.* Retrieved from https://cityofracine.org/Racine-Transit/

132. Ibid.

133. Ibid.

134. Ibid.

135. Federal Transit Administration. (2014). *Belle Urban System - Racine (The Bus): 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50006.pdf

136. *Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2013, October). Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2013-2017.* Retrieved from http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/CAPR/capr-286-racine-county-public-transit-plan-2013-2017.pdf

137. Ibid.

138. Federal Transit Administration. (2014). *Belle Urban System - Racine (The Bus): 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50006.pdf

139. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2013, October). *Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2013-2017.* Retrieved from http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/CAPR/capr-286-racine-county-public-transit-plan-2013-2017.pdf

140. Ibid.

141. Federal Transit Administration. (2014). *Belle Urban System - Racine (The Bus): 2014 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/50006.pdf

142. Waukesha Metro. (n.d.). *Riding Information.* Retrieved from http://www.waukesha-wi.gov/735/Riding-Information

143. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2017, April). *Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan For Waukesha County: 2016.* Retrieved from http://www.sewrpc.org/SEWRPCFiles/Publications/mr/mr-234-public-transit-human-services-waukesha-co-2016.PDF

144. Ibid.

145. Find-A-Ride Network. (n.d.). *About Find a Ride Network.* Retrieved from http://www.find-a-ride.org/about-us/

146. Federal Transit Administration. (n.d.). *City of Waukesha Transit Commission: 2016 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/transit_agency_profile_doc/2016/50096.pdf

147. U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Wausau city, Wisconsin: Race and Hispanic Origin.* Retrieved from https://factfinder.census.gov/bkmk/cf/1.0/en/place/Wausau city, Wisconsin/RACE_AND_HISPANIC_ORIGIN

148. "North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2014 , October). *Marathon County Transportation Program Needs Assessment.* Retrieved from http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/CPZ/Documents/MCTP_NeedsAssess_Oct2014.pdf

149. United Way of Marathon County. (n.d.). *LIFE Report*. Retrieved from http://www.unitedwaymc.org/improve-lives/community-data/

150. Ibid.

151. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2017). *City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan 2017.* Retrieved from http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/Planning/Documents/Comprehensive_Plan2017.pdf

152. United Way of Marathon County. (n.d.). *LIFE Report.* Retrieved from http://www.unitedwaymc.org/improve-lives/community-data/

153. Federal Transit Administration. (2016). *Wausau Area Transit System: 2016 Annual Agency Profile.* Retrieved from https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/transit_agency_profile_doc/2016/50091.pdf

154. Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission. (2016, November). *Wausau Area Long Range Transportation Plan 2050.* Retrieved from http://www.co.marathon.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/CPZ/Documents/MPO_2016_LRTP_Final_Plan.pdf

155. Ibid.

156. Wausau Metro Ride. (n.d.). *Metro Ride Overview & Statistics.* Retrieved from http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/Transit/Documents/MCDEVCO%205_22_2017.pdf

157. North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (2017). *City of Wausau Comprehensive Plan 2017.* Retrieved from http://www.ci.wausau.wi.us/Portals/0/Departments/Planning/Documents/Comprehensive_Plan2017.pdf

158. Ibid.

SIERRA
CLUB

MICAH
TO DO WHAT IS JUST!

1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN
Promoting Healthy Communities

SOPHIA
A MEMBER OF WISDOM

NAOMI
North Central Area Congregations Organized to Make an Impact

Wisconsin Council of the
Blind & Visually Impaired

CHIPPEWA VALLEY TRANSIT ALLIANCE
CVTA

ESTHER
Faith Communities United for Justice

WISDOM
Statewide Transportation Campaign