Coulee Region Transportation Study

Innovative Solutions for the 21st Century

Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL)

Transit Focus Group Meeting

August 26, 2015

Study team

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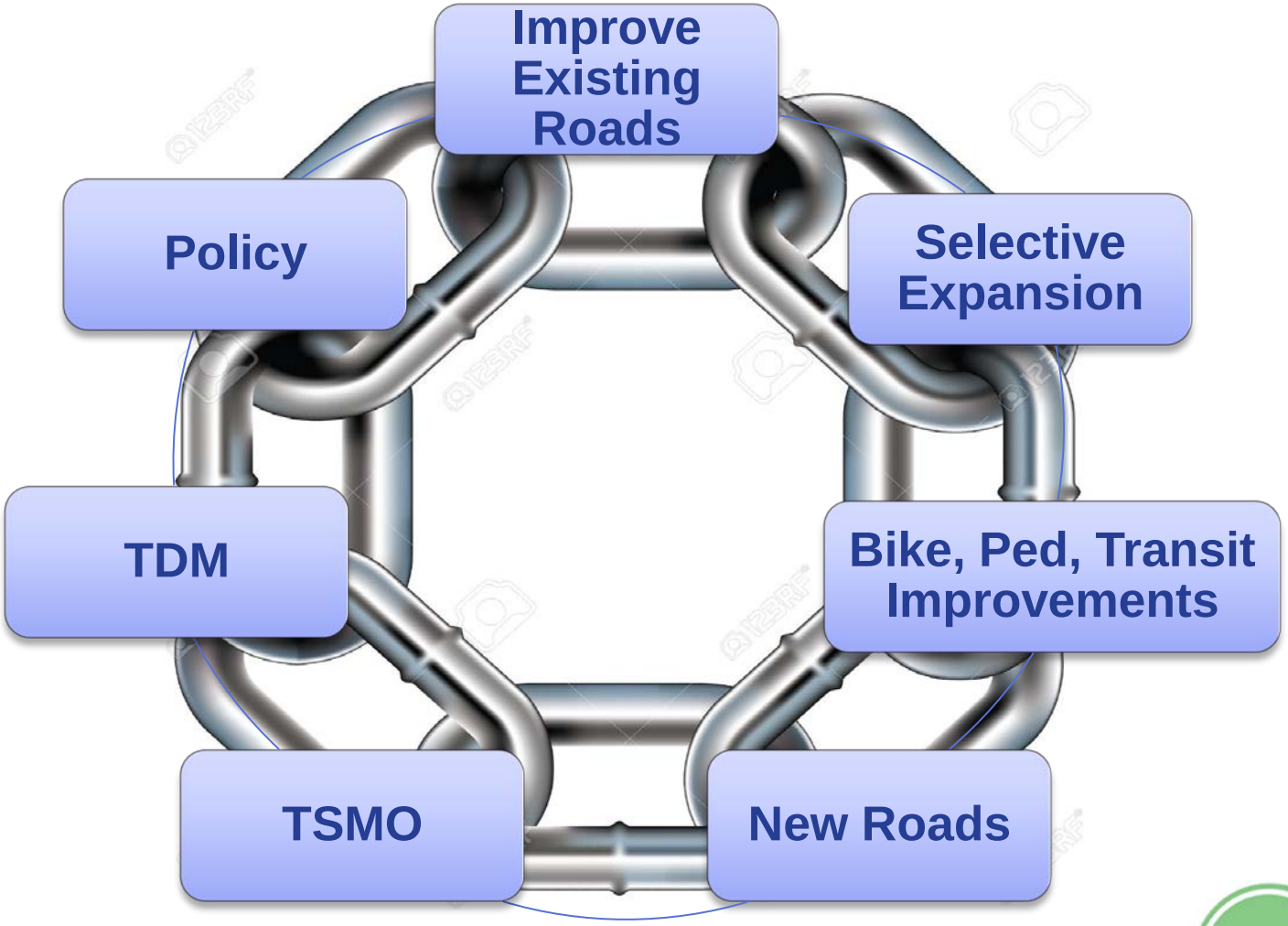
Broad Strategy Packages are Linked



Strategy Funneling Process

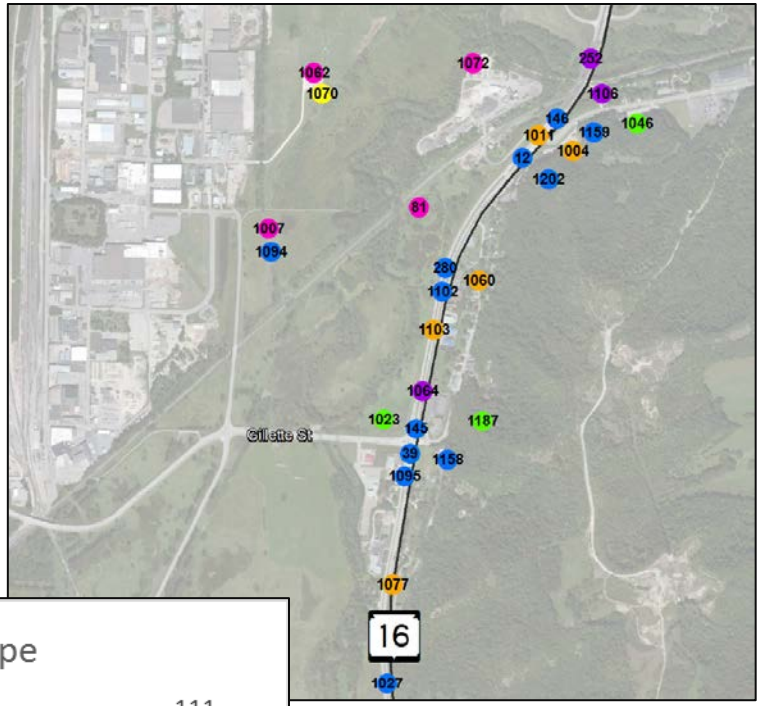
Strategy Packages

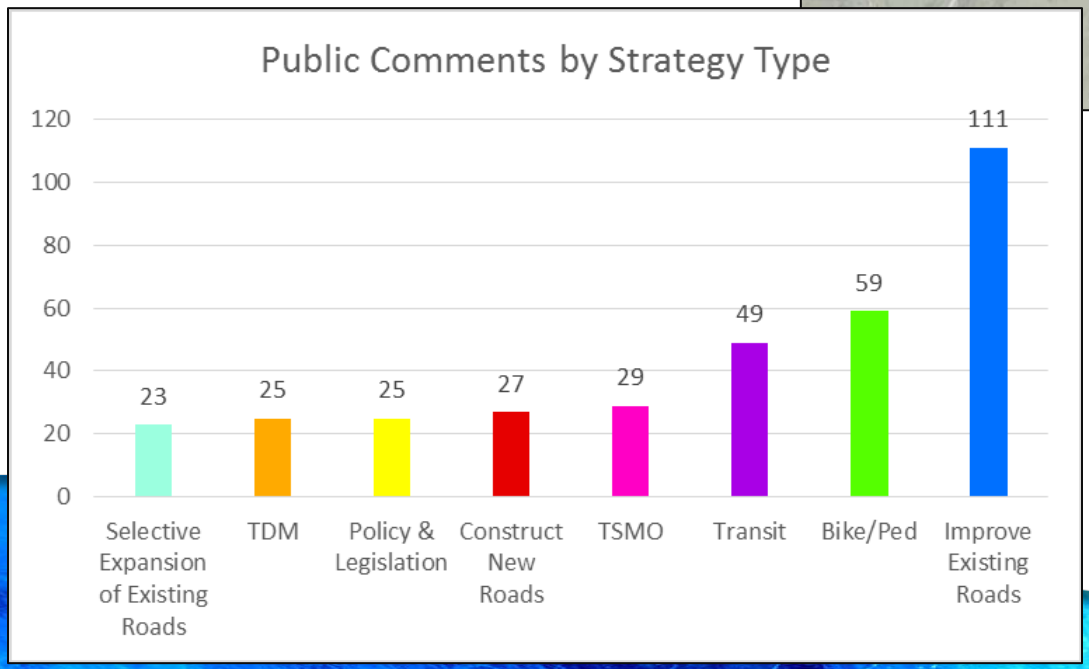
Goal and Objectives

Recommended Strategy Packages

Public Comments

- Approximately 550 comments
  - 350 from the public
  - 200 from Focus Groups
- Sorted by strategy type



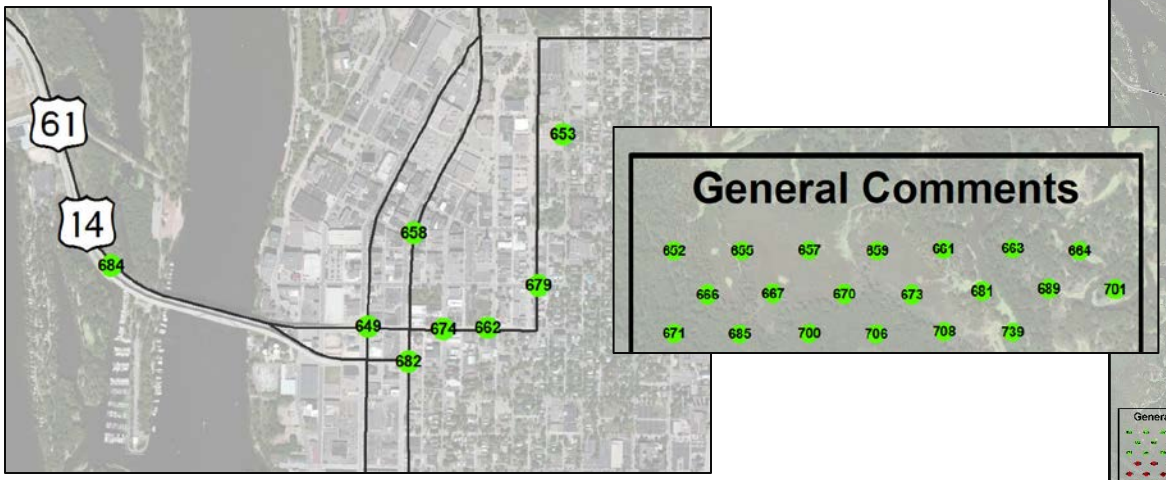


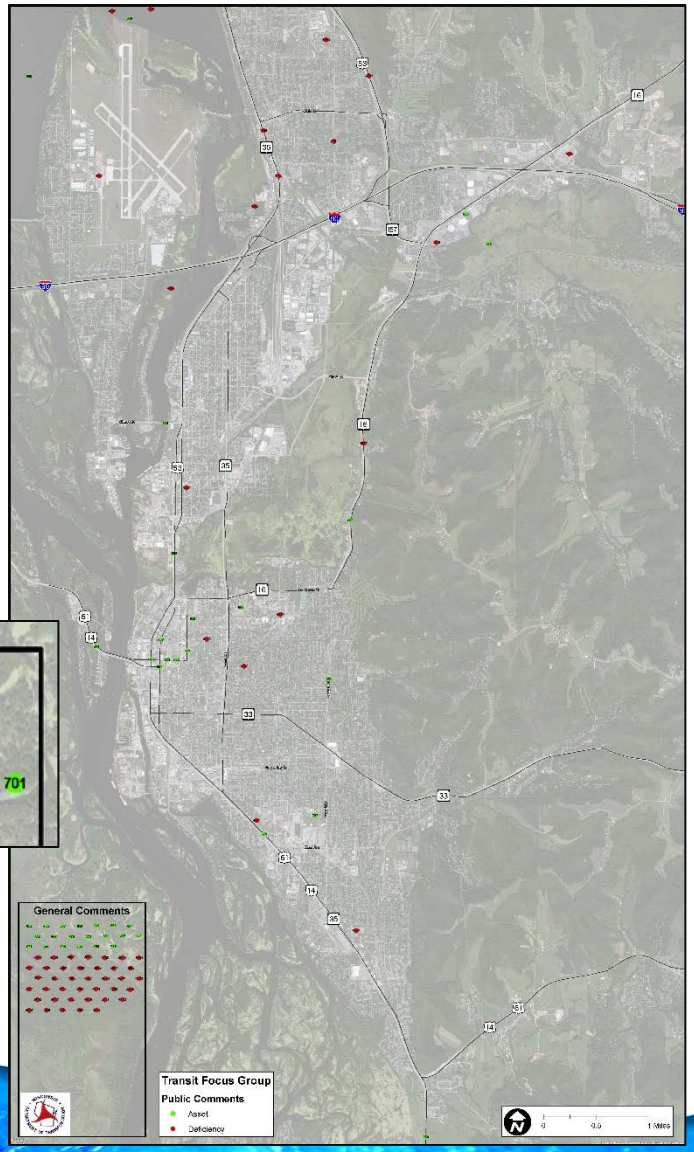
June 2015 Transit Focus Group

- Staff presented study overview and outlined process
- Group identified assets and deficiencies

Transit Focus Group Comments

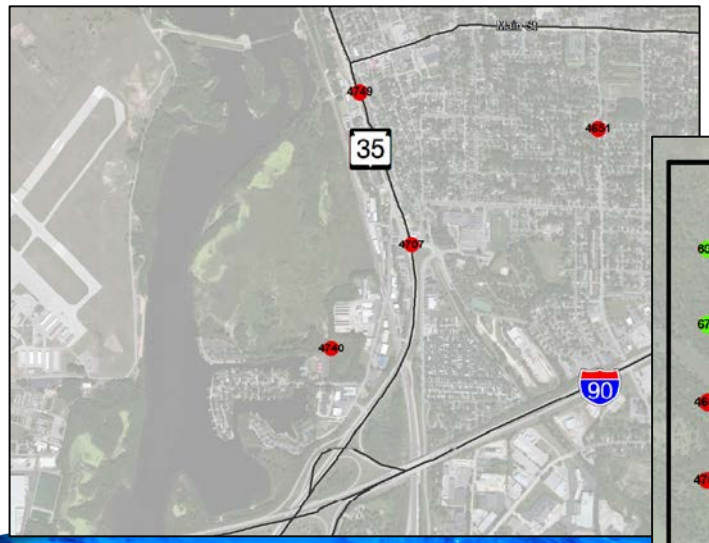
- Assets (green dots)
  - 42 comments
  - Many general comments
  - Many comments downtown La Crosse

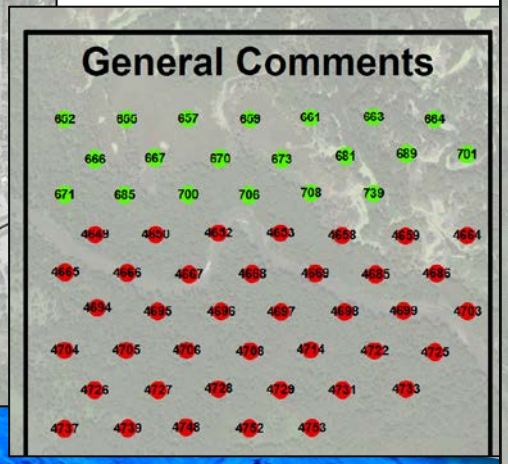


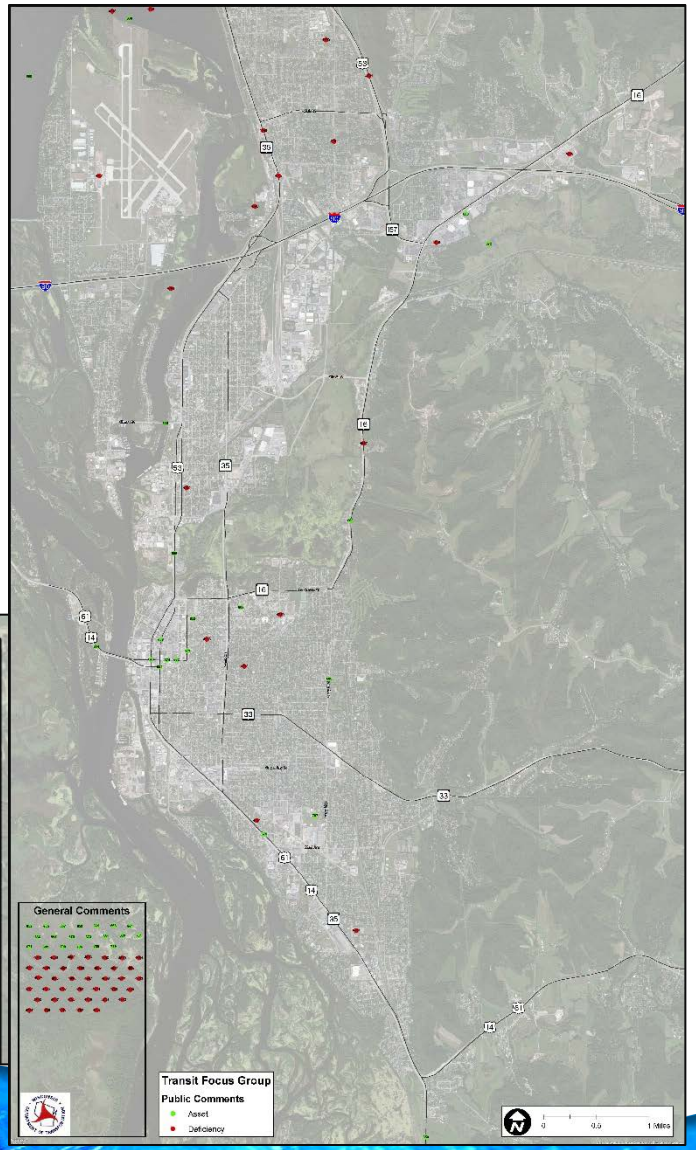


Transit Focus Group Comments

- Deficiencies (red dots)
  - 60 comments
  - Many general comments
  - Many comments in surrounding communities







June 2015 Transit Focus Group

Assets

- Transit Center
- Coordinated transfers
- La Crescent service
- SMRT – start of regional system
- Service to mall
- Multiple routes serving downtown

June 2015 Transit Focus Group

Deficiencies

- Express Bus/BRT to Onalaska/West Salem
- Park and Rides
- Rider information at stations
- Commuter options for Onalaska/Holmen
- Signal priorities for buses

June 2015 Transit Focus Group

- Assets and deficiencies related to study goals including this desired outcome related to mobility:

  Provide comfortable, direct, reliable and convenient access for all modes of transportation.

Bus Rapid Transit – What is it?

- Purest form – separate facility with characteristics of rail transit (stations, exclusive right-of-way, etc)
- Spectrum of improvements – goal of improving transit and mobility, thus increasing ridership.
- How to increase ridership?
  - Reliability
  - Reduced travel times
  - Convenience

Bus Rapid Transit – Runway types

- Busways
- Arterial bus lanes
- Transit signal priority
- Queue jumps/bypass lanes
- Curb extensions

Bus Rapid Transit – Busways

- A Busway is a travel lane restricted to traffic other than transit vehicles
- Distinguishing feature of a Busway is its **separation** from roadway by fencing, curbing, or raised grade (see right)
- Advantages include no vying for travel lanes with other vehicles, less travel time than with standard bus service

Bus Rapid Transit – Dedicated Lanes

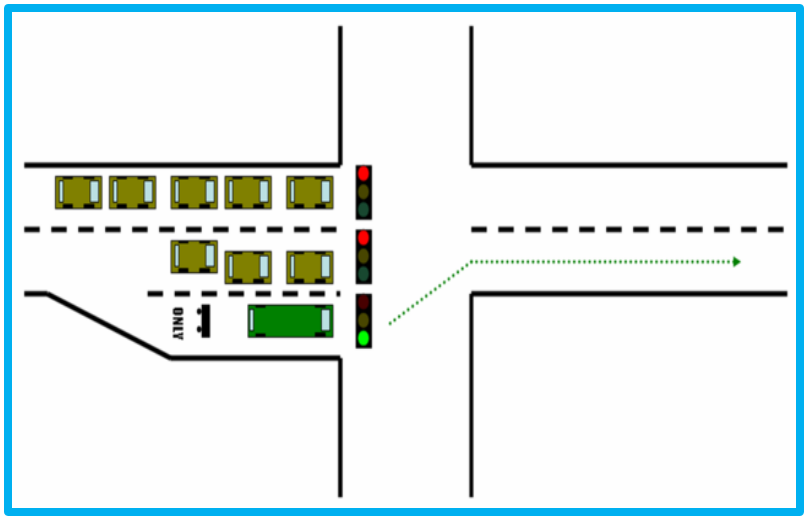
- A travel lane restricted to traffic other than transit vehicles
- Allowing mixed traffic use on *shared* roadway distinguish with painted lines and BUS ONLY
- Often right turns allowed in this lane.
- Advantages include no vying for travel lanes with other vehicles, less travel time than with standard bus service

Bus Rapid Transit – Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

- TSP refers to the use of timing traffic lights to give priority to the travel of transit vehicles. TSP may be incorporated into individual intersections or along an entire corridor.
  - GPS units on bus
  - Detection device and transmitter
- Advantages are that the implementation and maintenance are minimal and the impact on other traffic is often times imperceptible
- Travel times can be shortened by 25% - 30%

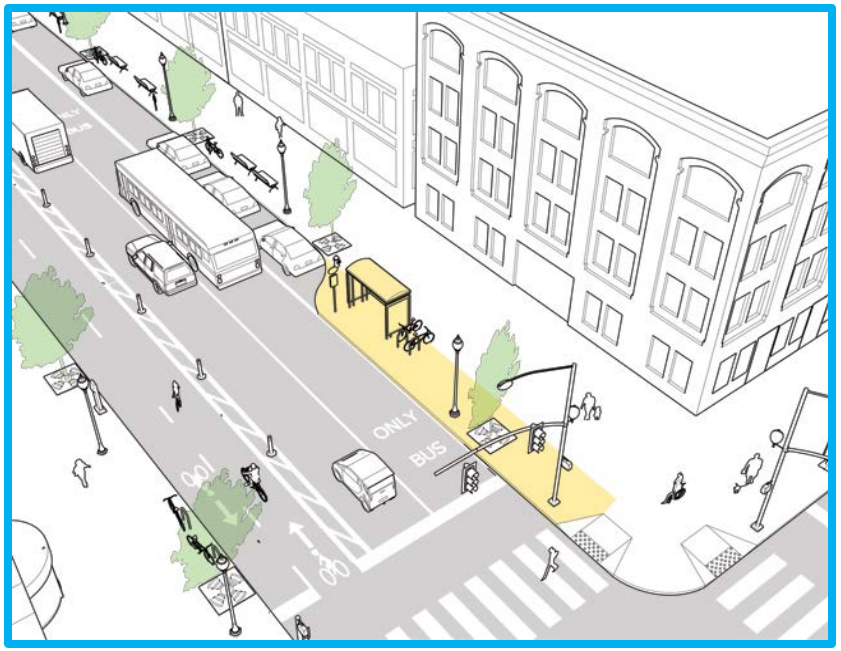
Bus Rapid Transit – Queue jumps/ Bypass lanes

- Alternatives to TSP include queue jumps and bypass lanes, which both require a right-turn or additional right lane.
- Utilize a special bus signal that gives buses an early green light to allow it to merge into the adjacent through lane. It gives the bus a “Head Start”[1]
- Bypass lanes make it possible for buses to cross an intersection to a stop on the far side before merging back into general traffic.



Bus Rapid Transit – Curb Extensions

- Make it easier and faster to pick up passengers eliminating the need to merge in and out of traffic
- Can be used to accommodate:
  - More visible seating
  - Wayfinding
  - Kiosks
  - Landscaping



Bus Rapid Transit – Other Elements

- Stops and Stations and Park and Ride
- Vehicles and fare collection
- Technology – Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) systems, passenger information
- Service plans
- Branding

Bus Rapid Transit – Midwest Examples

- Cleveland, Ohio:
  Greater Cleveland RTA's HealthLine
- Grand Rapids, Michigan:
  The Rapid's Silver Line
- Kansas City, Missouri:
  Kansas City Area Transportation Authority Metro Area Express
- Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota:
  A Line (Snelling BRT)

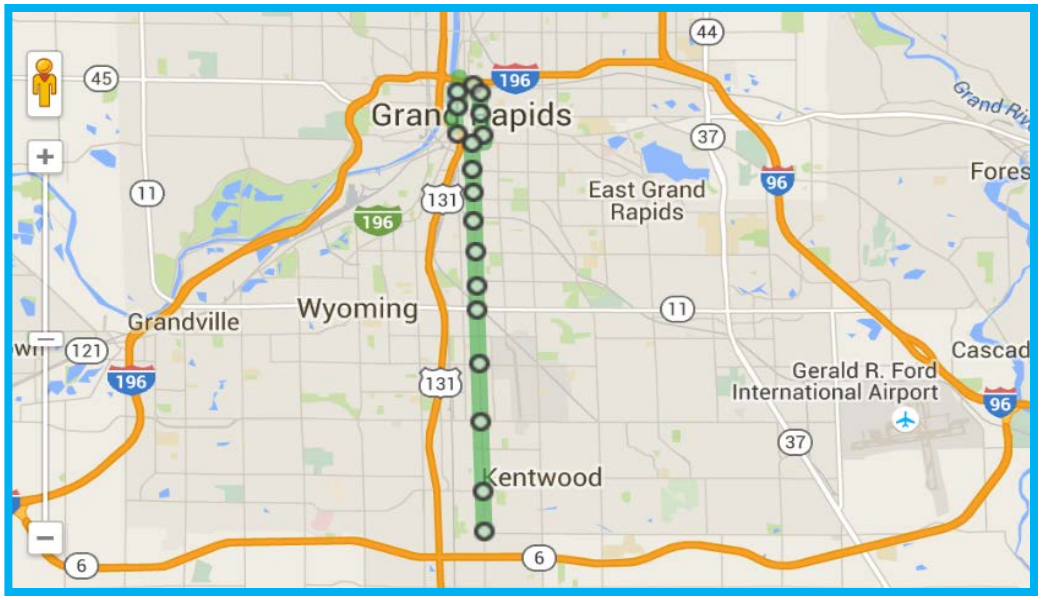
Bus Rapid Transit – Cleveland, Ohio: RTA's HealthLine

- Began service in 2008 along 9.2 miles of roadway connecting two large employment areas, Downtown and University Circle
- Replaced 108 bus stops with 36 stations; travel time was reduced from 40 minutes to 28 minutes with frequencies of 5 minutes at peak commute times
  - Dedicated right-of-way
  - Level boarding stations
  - Traffic signal prioritization
  - Off-board fare collection
  - Real-time information displays
- 9.2 miles of roadway improvements along the Euclid Avenue corridor with 24 hour service
- $200 million build, RTA sold naming rights to gain sponsorships (Cleveland Clinic and University Hospitals)

Bus Rapid Transit – Grand Rapids, MI: Silver Line

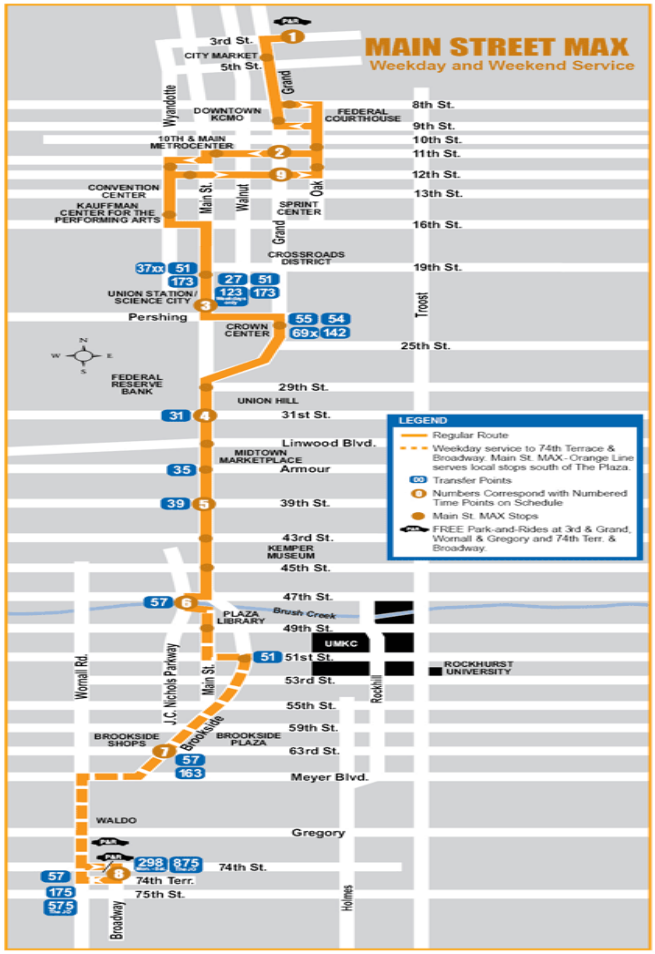
- Cuts a 45-minute drive to a 27-minute commute
- **Bus-only lanes**, stop frequency times of 10 minutes, **real-time arrival & departure times at stations**

Bus Rapid Transit – Grand Rapids, MI: Silver Line



- Approximate 9.5-mile line with 20 stops, connecting downtown with its southern suburbs
- About $32 million sourced from the federal government, $8 million from the state, remainder from property taxes

Bus Rapid Transit – Kansas City, MOL MAX



Kansas City, Missouri: Metro Area Express (MAX)

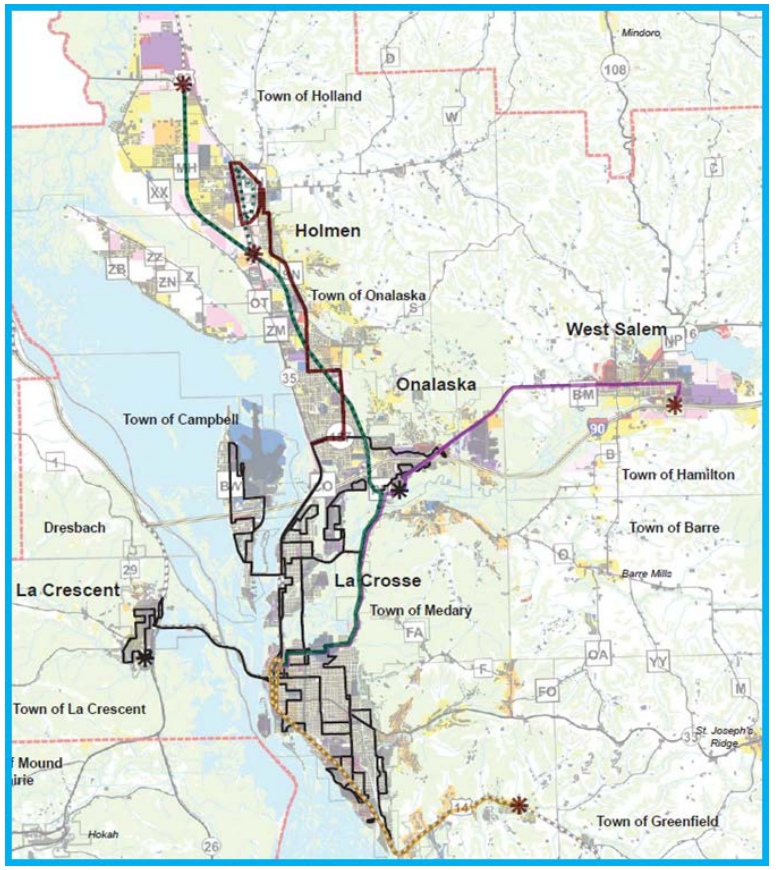
- MAX uses **designated lanes** and **makes fewer stops** than traditional bus service
- Features include new bus shelters and **electronic signs showing when the next bus would arrive**.
- **Park and Ride facilities** are available at stations throughout the route
- MAX buses offer Wi-Fi services.
- The new service cut the time it took for riders traveling from the Country Club Plaza to downtown by about 25 percent
- July 2015, A bill was signed into law that renews a **half-cent sales tax** critical for funding public transportation

Bus Rapid Transit – Minneapolis, MN: A Line (Snelling BRT)

- Total cost of $25 million
  - Federal $7 million, State $16 million, Local partners $2 million[7]
- The state's first urban BRT service is currently under construction with service beginning in 2016.
  - 20 stations over approximately 10 miles and service every 10 minutes
- Designated lanes, curbside stations
- Planning included the study of (12) route alternatives

Future Transit in the Region

Coulee Vision Plan - focuses on building on the existing transit service with the addition of **four new routes** that would extend the region's fixed-route service area to include the town of Shelby and the villages of West Salem and Holmen, and expanded service within the city of Onalaska"



Future Transit in the Region

Long Range Transportation Plan, Transit Plan and the Coulee Vision Plan

- What is envisioned for the **future of transit**?
- "[The city of La Crosse's] vision is to reduce the dependency on the single-occupant vehicle as the primary mode of transportation and to prioritize cycling, walking, public and private transit, telecommuting, land use changes, parking changes, and other supportive measures[1]" (Coulee Vision, 6-18).
- ***La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC):***

  Coulee Vision is the metropolitan transportation plan for the La Crosse and La Crescent area
- This plan establishes transportation goals and outlines strategies to attain the needs for the region over the next several decades.

Future Transit in the Region

Long Range Transportation Plan, Transit Plan and the Coulee Vision Plan

- Major Action Step: Regional Transportation Planning
- Three Major concerns:
  - Mobility
  - Safety
  - Land Use

"*Transit stops … are hard to access because of difficult road crossings and a lack of pedestrian infrastructure*" (Coulee Vision, 6-1).

- Transit-specific plans to address concerns (Coulee Vision, 6-16):
  - Prepare short-, mid-, and long-range transit plans for the Metropolitan Transit Utility (MTU) every 10 years
    - LAPC – 2008-2015 Transit Development Plan for the La Crosse MTU, 2007
    - Grand River Transit Service Enhancement & Policy Plan 2015-2025, 2015

Future Transit Policy in the Region

Long Range Transportation Plan, Transit Plan and the Coulee Vision Plan

- Work with partners to develop regional transit system. Study coordinating the LAPC with La Crosse County & Mississippi River Regional Transportation Planning Commission to develop regional transit system.
- Develop a framework for a regional transit authority (RTA) and implement when State legislation provides RTA opportunities.

Intelligent Transportation Systems

- Traffic management tools like closed-circuit TV (CCTV) cameras and vehicle detection systems that measure and record travel demand
- Advanced traffic signal systems that react to traffic in real-time
- Transit applications like transit signal priority and universal fare cards that make transit a more attractive commuting option
- Traveler information sources like bus arrival time signs and 511 that help travelers plan and track their trips

Role of ITS and Technology

- Signal priorities - efficiency of service
- CCTV – transit safety and security
- Advantages for transit – time savings which attracts riders

ITS Funding Options

- A number of funding sources are available. In addition to local funding, the federal government Surface Transportation Plan (STP) and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) (if in nonattainment zone) Funding programs
- The STP provides flexible funding that may be used by States and localities for project on any transit capital projects.
- However, the CMAQ program may also fund 100% costs for signal timing projects, where STP is hard to obtain greater than 80% federal support.
- Pass State legislation to enable Regional Transit Authority with the ability to tax for dedicated funding of program

Bus Rapid Transit – Lessons Learned

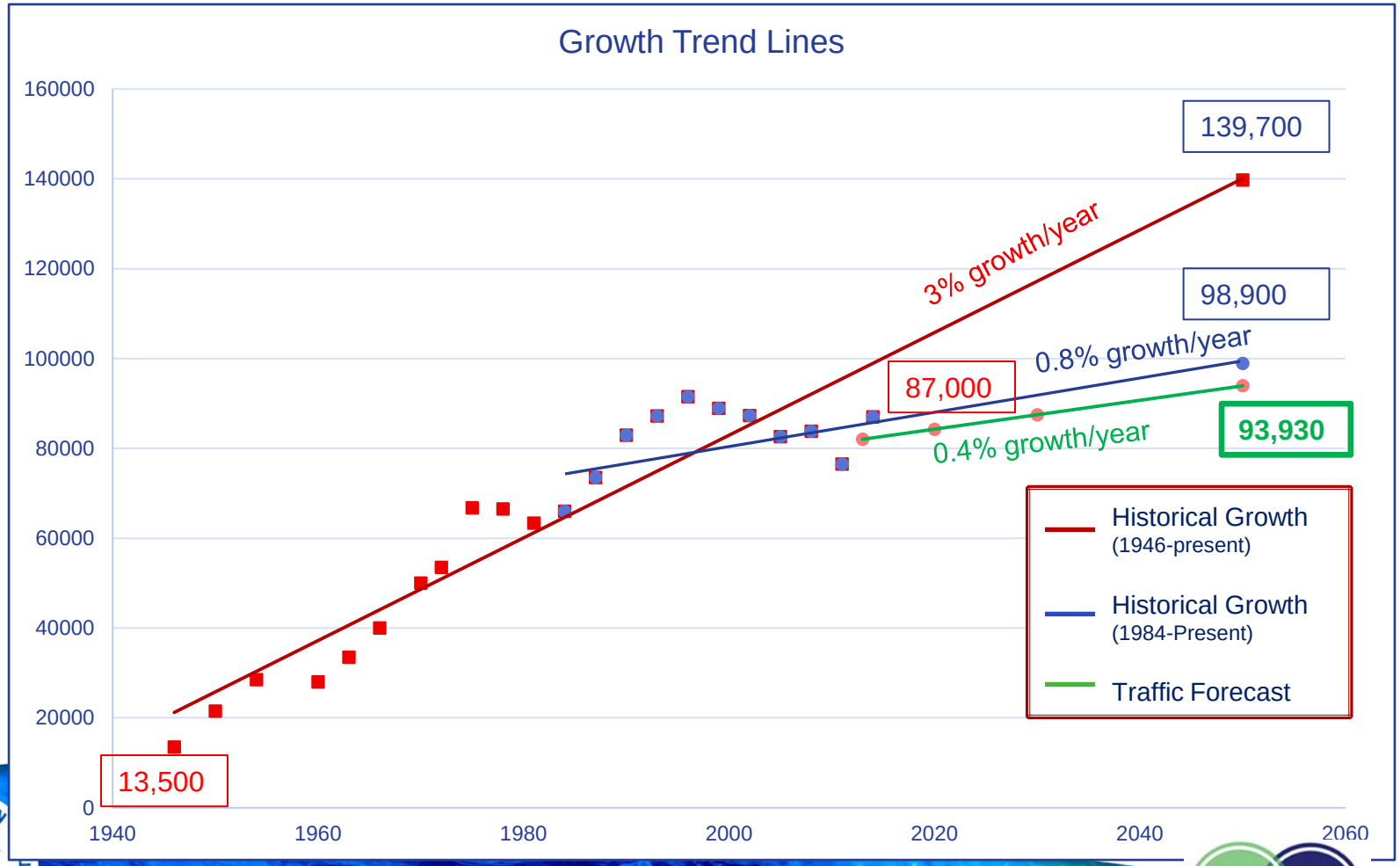
- Variety of elements that can improve transit
- For the Coulee Region, where might there be opportunities to implement these strategies?
  - Existing roadways
  - Expanded roadways
  - New roadways

Next Steps

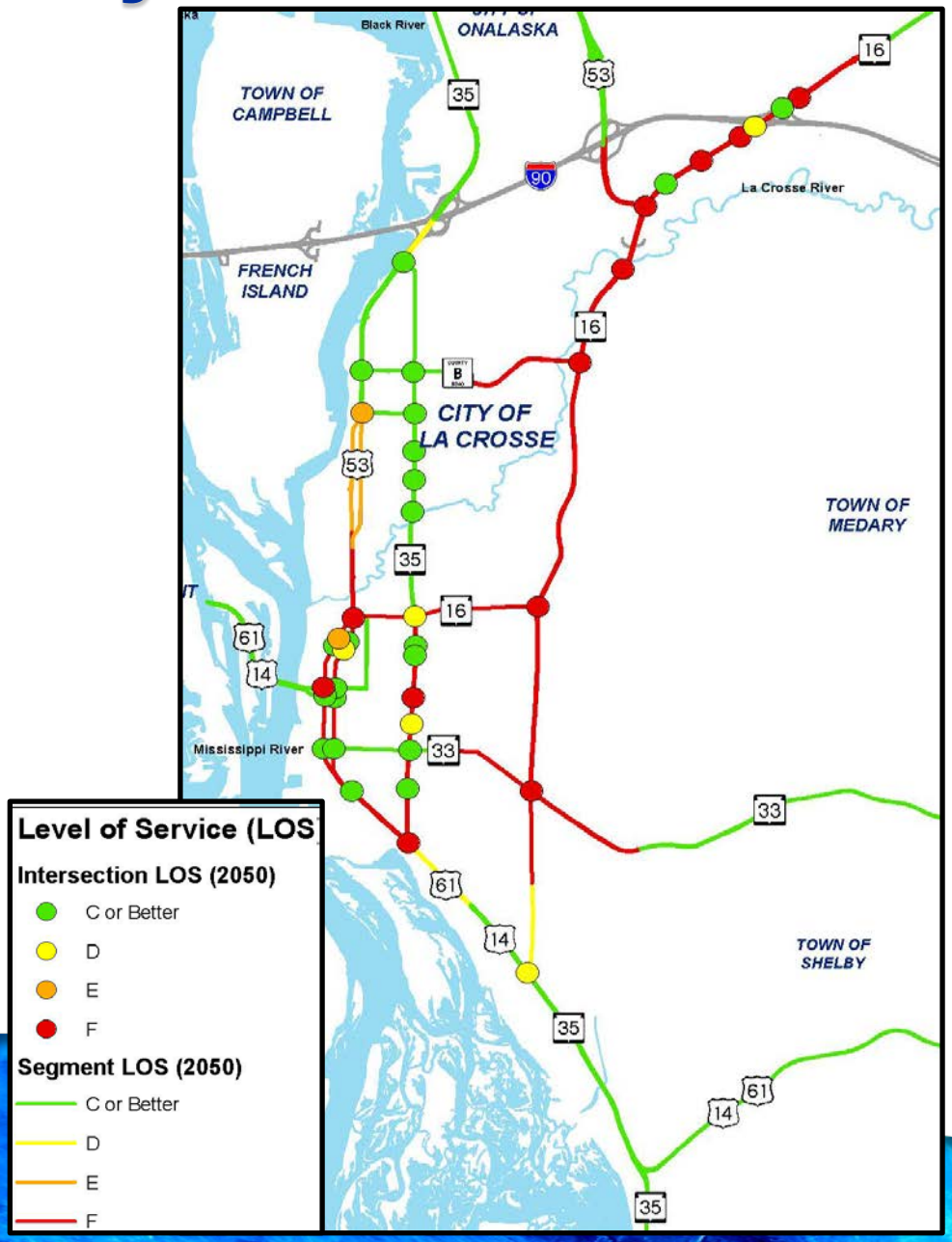
- As strategies and alternatives advance in the study, find opportunities to implement infrastructure for transit that could
  - benefit existing transit services and
  - provide opportunities for future additional services
- Examples may include bump outs, dedicated lanes, signal priorities, ITS elements, etc.
- Develop planning level routes and services to be associated with likely alternatives

Traffic Forecasts

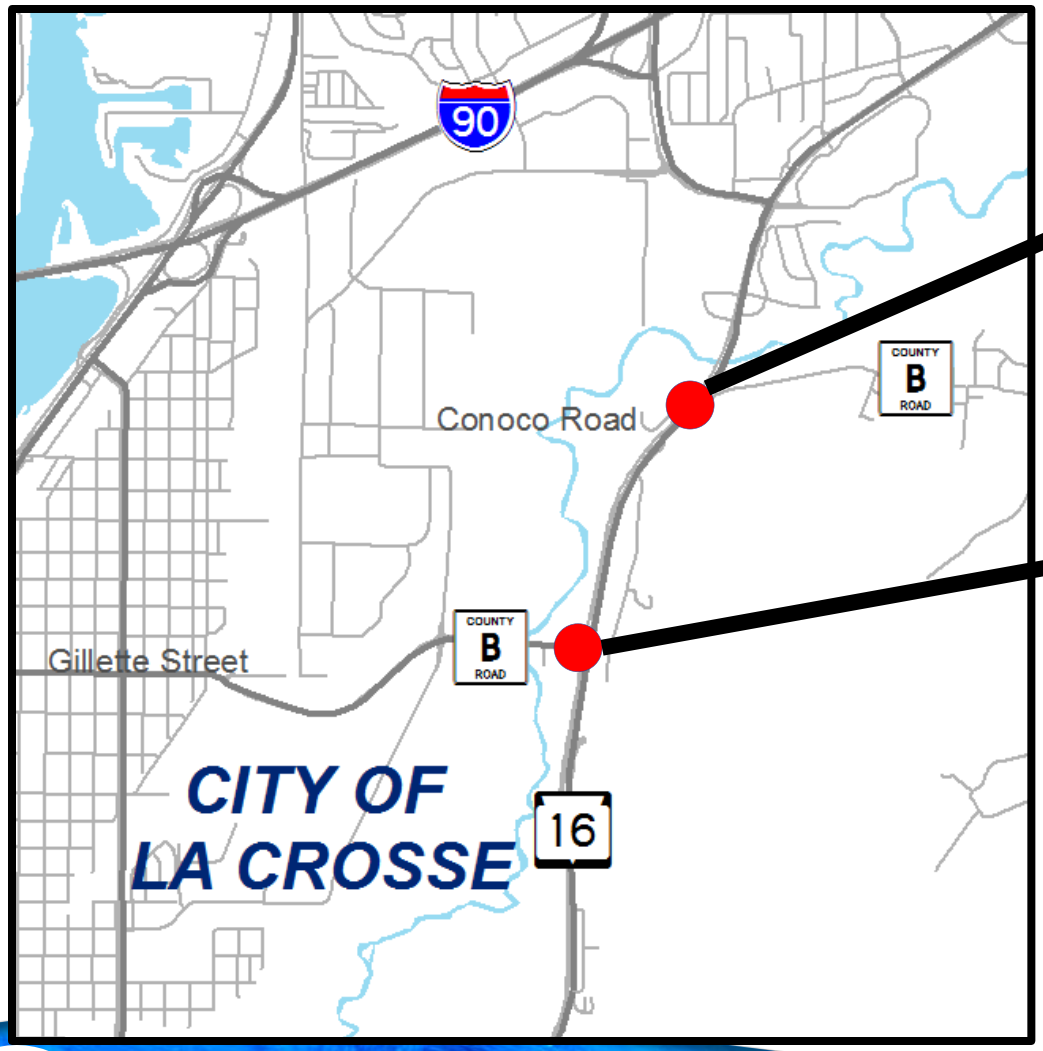
US 53 + WIS 35 + WIS 16 @ La Crosse River



Capacity/LOS-Future



Peak Hour Mode Shift Example

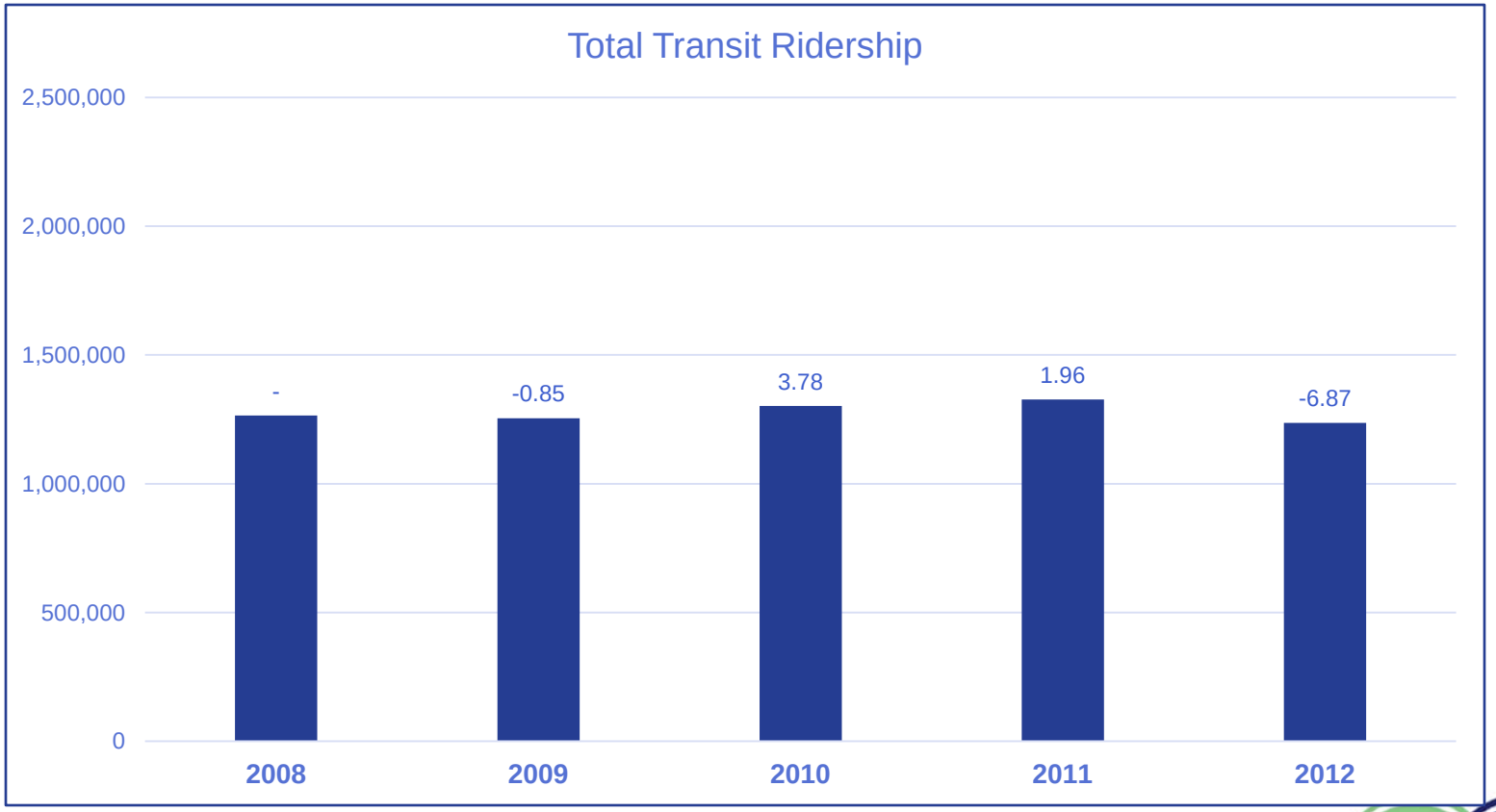


1,208 vehicle reduction needed at County B/Conoco Road for LOS D in 2050

432 vehicle reduction needed at County B/Gillette Road for LOS D in 2050

Total transit ridership – Coulee Region

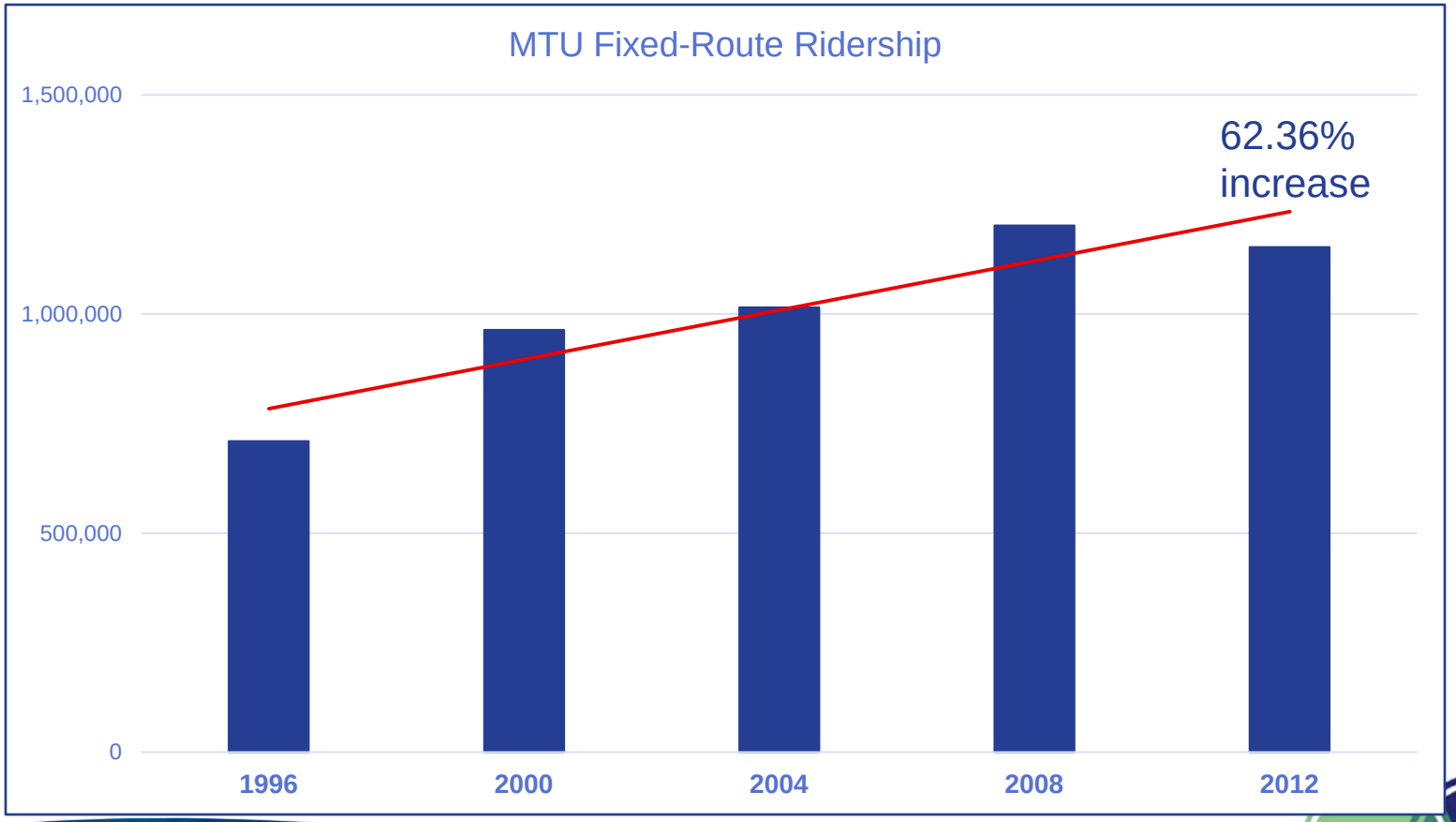
- OHWSPT Shared Ride Taxi
- La Crosse County Rural Transit
- Jefferson Lines
- MTU



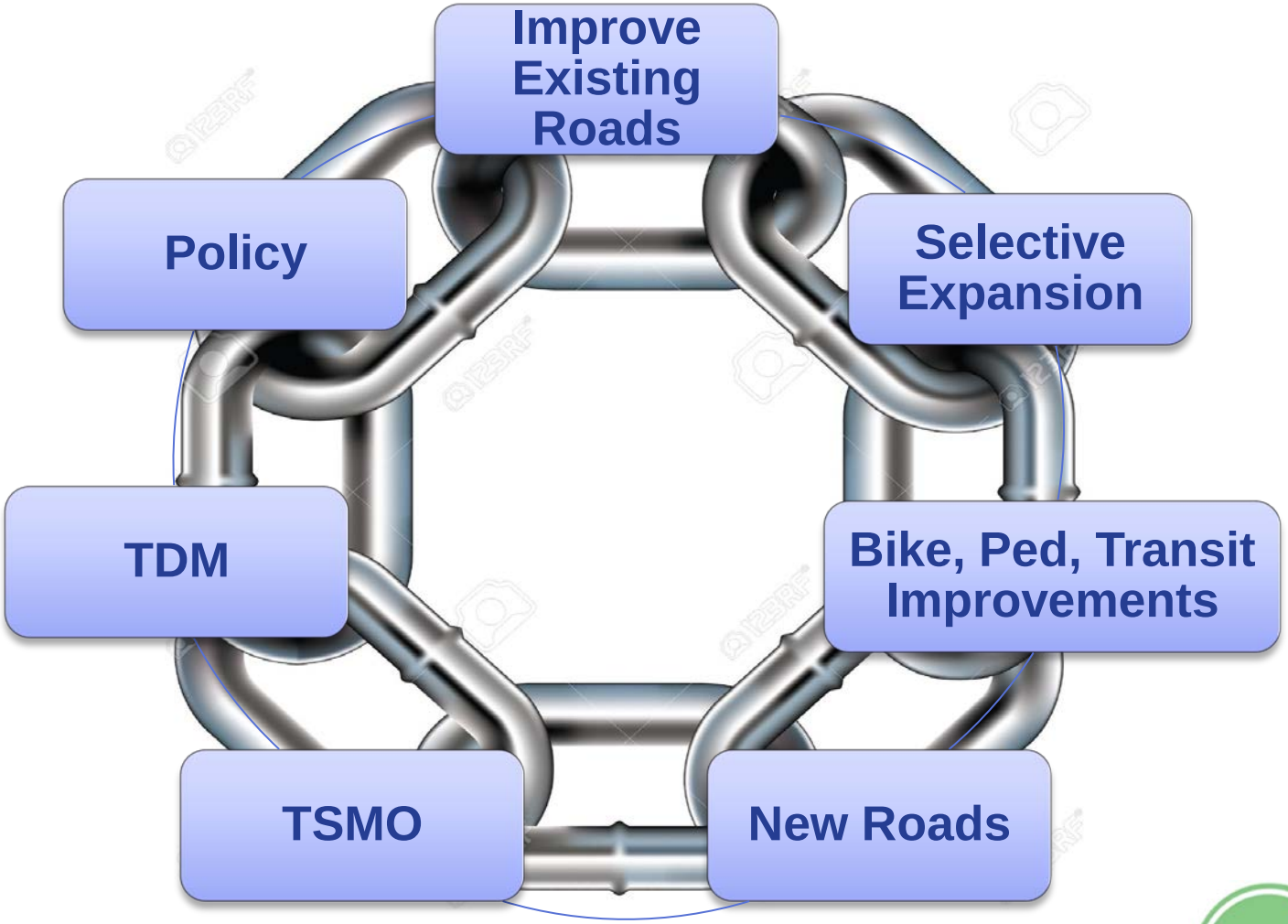
Source: La Crosse Area Planning Committee

Transit – MTU Fixed Route Ridership

**Source: US Federal Transit Administration – National Transit Database and MTU*



Broad Strategy Packages are Linked



Mode Increase Exercise

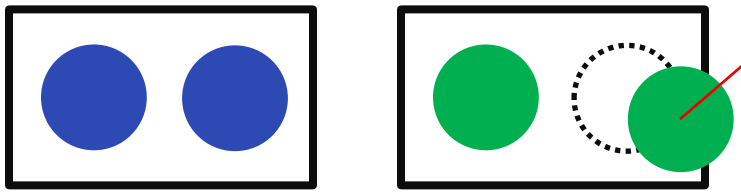
- Step 1: brainstorm

Mode Increase Exercise

- Step 2: prioritize

Priority strategy

High priority strategy



Questions?

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