

# CHAPTER 8: Provide Mobility and Transportation Choice

## ► **POLICIES IN THIS CHAPTER FOR PROVIDING MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION CHOICE:**

- › *Support public, specialized, and human services transit*
- › *Support development of fixed-guideway transit services*
- › *Increase intercity travel options by improving intercity passenger rail service*
- › *Improve intercity bus service and connections*
- › *Advocate for improved air service at Wisconsin airports*
- › *Support bicycle and pedestrian facilities and plans*
- › *Encourage transportation demand management strategies*
- › *Facilitate intermodal passenger connections*

**P**roviding mobility and transportation choice creates the foundation of an efficient, balanced and safe transportation system—which is critical to Wisconsin’s economic vitality and quality of life.

Wisconsin’s transportation system offers many options to provide mobility and choice. These include public transit (bus, fixed-guideway, specialized and human services transit), bicycling, walking, park and ride facilities, intercity bus, intercity passenger rail, ferries, and passenger air service.

WisDOT, local and federal governments, and the private sector work together to provide these options. WisDOT’s involvement can include directly contracting for service, as it does for Amtrak; building and maintaining infrastructure such as highways; distributing state and federal funds; or providing technical assistance.

A properly integrated transportation network brings multiple modes together through public and private sector coordination of local and intercity transportation services. For example, a facility where passengers can conveniently transfer from an intercity bus to a train promotes use of public transportation and can spur economic development near the facility.

For the purposes of the plan, mobility refers to the ease with which people and freight can move smoothly on the transportation network. Congestion can negatively impact the mobility of people and goods. As congestion increases, the amount of time needed to travel between places increases, and as a result, mobility may be decreased (see Chapter 7, *Foster Wisconsin’s Economic Growth*). When various transportation options are available, individuals can avoid travel on congested modes.

For example, a person may choose to take transit or ride a bike rather than travel by car. Likewise, businesses may choose to transport their goods by truck if a rail corridor is congested. Refer to Chapter 9, *Promote Transportation Efficiencies*, for information on how WisDOT will work to improve traffic movement (such as addressing congestion) on the state trunk highway system. Refer to Chapter 7, *Foster Wisconsin’s Economic Growth*, for information on how WisDOT supports freight movement.

Many of the policies in this chapter can be implemented using existing federal, state and local resources; however, other policies call for significant changes to the state’s transportation system and require new funding sources.

### **WisDOT’s vision for mobility and choice is:**

- › More transportation alternatives available to all Wisconsin residents and visitors
- › Improved connections between transportation modes
- › Improved public awareness of the availability of alternative transportation modes



## Challenges

A critical function of Wisconsin's transportation system is to provide convenient and affordable access to jobs, health care, financial and social services, educational facilities, and leisure activities. However, this is not always accomplished by existing transportation services. Many people in Wisconsin have no choice except to travel by automobile. Others are hindered by limited connectivity or lack of flexibility in the schedules of alternative modes. Mobility will continue to be a challenge as the population ages and as businesses develop in areas traditionally underserved by public transportation.

The importance of enhanced transportation choices for those who cannot or choose not to drive will increase in the future. Population projections show a 90 percent increase in persons older than 65 (compared to a 20 percent increase in total population) from 2000 to 2030 in Wisconsin. Projections also show a 75 percent increase in the number of people 75 or older, an age group that traditionally voluntarily reduces or eliminates driving.<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 3, *Trends*, for more information.

Mobility may also be a challenge for young people seeking driver's licenses. In recent years, the percentage of public schools offering driver education programs has steadily declined across the state. The only options for some students are driving courses offered by private agencies, which are typically more expensive. If young people ages 16 and 17 cannot receive driver's education due to its lack of availability in public schools and the cost of commercial driver training schools, they will not be able to obtain a driver's license until they are 18. These unlicensed young people may choose to drive without a license and insurance. Lack of a driver's license may also limit their mobility to those transportation modes that are available to them such as public transit, bicycling and walking.

People with disabilities, drivers who cannot afford a vehicle, and those who cannot or choose not to drive can also face significant mobility barriers. Without a concerted effort to address mobility, many people will continue to face challenges in accessing job markets, goods and services.

<sup>1</sup> Wisconsin Department of Administration. March 2004. "Wisconsin Population 2030".

## Providing mobility and choice

Transportation options are important because they provide an alternative to private auto travel, creating a more balanced transportation system and enhancing mobility. They are also the only means of travel for those who cannot or choose not to drive.

## Opportunities

WisDOT has developed several key policies that will enhance the state's transportation system and build upon the department's commitment to increase mobility and choice:

- » Support public, specialized and human services transit
- » Increase intercity travel options by improving intercity passenger rail service
- » Improve intercity bus service and connections
- » Support development of fixed-guideway transit services
- » Advocate for improved air service at Wisconsin airports
- » Support bicycle and pedestrian facilities and plans
- » Encourage transportation demand management strategies
- » Facilitate intermodal passenger connections

Through these policies, WisDOT will build new relationships and expand existing partnerships to address Wisconsin's mobility challenges.

► **POLICY:**  
*Support public, specialized  
 and human services transit*

WisDOT recognizes the importance of public, human services and specialized transit in meeting basic transportation needs and achieving comprehensive statewide mobility. The department will work toward a coordinated system of public, human services and specialized transit services in urban and rural areas to provide mobility for all Wisconsin residents.

To implement this policy, WisDOT will:

- » Work to ensure the availability of adequate funding for existing transit systems
- » Work with partners to improve transit service coordination, eliminate inefficiencies, and improve transit planning
- » Support existing and expanded urban (including suburban) and rural regional transit systems with new governance structures, funding sources and increased coordination

## Background

Transit is often the only transportation option for many individuals, and it is an alternative option for others. Robust transit service also helps attract and retain businesses and jobs. A 2006 transit benefit-cost analysis indicated that every \$1 invested in transit produces a return of more than \$3 of socio-economic benefits in Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> In addition, transit is a relatively fuel-efficient mode of transportation, and produces significantly fewer greenhouse gas emissions per passenger mile than the private auto or airlines.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Wisconsin Department of Transportation. *The Socio-Economic Benefits of Transit in Wisconsin. Phase II: Benefit Cost Analysis.* May 2006.

<sup>3</sup>Davis, Todd and Hale, Monica. *Public Transportation's Contribution to U.S. Greenhouse Gas Reduction.* Science Applications International Corporation. September 2007.

## Economic benefits of mobility and choice

Improving mobility and transportation choice benefits Wisconsin's economy by:

- › Improving access to jobs
- › Connecting businesses with labor markets
- › Improving access to goods and services
- › Encouraging economic development in cities
- › Making Wisconsin attractive to businesses

In Wisconsin, transit services consist of public, specialized and human services transit:

- » Public transit is either a fixed-route or demand-response service available to all riders for a specific fare
- » Specialized and human services transit is provided for individuals who do not operate a car due to their age, a disability or income levels

Federal, state and local agencies pay for various human services and specialized transportation programs for veterans, people with disabilities, seniors and low-income individuals. These programs specifically fund fixed-route, demand-response or volunteer driver services. Some of these services are only available to certain riders based on eligibility criteria.

As the state's population increases and grows older, greater pressure will be placed on transit systems to meet increased demand. The number of Wisconsin residents 65 years or older is expected to double between 1990 and 2030. Twenty-one percent of the state's residents are currently older than 65 or have a disability, and are likely to use transit to meet basic needs.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey. Disabled population age 5 to 65 plus the population over 65 years of age in Wisconsin. Information retrieved July 3, 2007. [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)





### Public transit in Wisconsin

- › Fixed-route bus
- › Commuter bus
- › Fixed-guideway (including commuter rail, light rail or streetcar, bus rapid transit)
- › Shared-ride taxi, which consists of demand-response systems of cars or vans that may not follow a fixed route, but carry several people at a time
- › Paratransit, which is a van or taxi service for persons whose disabilities do not permit them to use a regular transit vehicle
- › Regional bus systems, including Bay Area Rural Transit (Bayfield/Ashland area, covering several counties and tribal areas), and the Sawyer and Washington county regional system
- › Countywide transit systems (Grant, Menominee, Ozaukee, Rusk, and Washington counties)

Federal and state gasoline taxes, registration fees and other transportation-based taxes help pay for transit systems. Passenger revenues and other local funds – generally property tax revenues – pay for the remainder of the operational costs. Increased fuel, insurance and health care costs have raised transit operating expenses faster than revenues have increased. These increases typically are not accounted for in funding formulas, so many transit systems have had to raise fares or decrease service levels to maintain service.

### *Challenges to providing comprehensive mobility with public transit*

This policy addresses the following financial limitations and challenges faced by transit systems in sustaining or expanding current service:

***Operating cost increases for existing transit systems are outpacing state and federal funding increases.*** Wisconsin provides one of the highest levels of financial support for public transit operating costs in the nation<sup>5</sup>; however, the cost to operate existing transit systems in the state is outpacing local, state and federal funding. Fuel, insurance, health care and other cost increases have raised operating costs 5 percent to 6 percent annually; meanwhile state funding levels continue to increase by 1 percent to 2 percent annually. Federal increases vary depending on system size and location, with the largest systems getting the smallest increases. As a result, state and federal funds are covering a smaller percentage of transit costs, and transit agencies are not receiving adequate funding to maintain current levels of service.

***Local funding is limited.*** Most transit systems in Wisconsin rely on property taxes and fares to pay a portion of operating costs, which makes it difficult to raise more local funds to meet increasing costs. In Madison and Milwaukee, where federal funding has increased the least compared to other Wisconsin cities, local funding from property taxes has not

<sup>5</sup> Wisconsin ranks 14th in the nation in state support for transit operations, according to the *Characteristics of State Funding for Public Transportation-2005*. United States Department of Transportation. Bureau of Transportation Statistics.



### Southeastern Wisconsin transit challenges

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the Milwaukee County Transit System warn that without changes to funding and governance structures, transit service in Milwaukee County will be greatly reduced by 2010 due to the lack of funds needed to retain current service levels.

The potential elimination of routes and reduction of service hours would decrease mobility options for people who depend on transit to get to work and other crucial destinations. This would intensify the challenges associated with the spatial mismatch between workers and jobs, and the temporal mismatch between job shifts and transit service hours.

A regional approach to transit, along with local revenue sources other than, or in addition to the property tax, could provide the necessary resources to retain or improve transit service in southeastern Wisconsin.

**Meeting additional transit needs requires additional funding.** Under the current funding structure for transit, funding new systems or expanded transit services reduces the amount of state and federal funding available to existing services. To meet the funding needs of existing systems as well as provide funding for new systems, the Wisconsin Legislature must proportionately increase funds for new services.

**Transit services lack coordination.** Transit services in Wisconsin are funded from various sources and are operated by numerous providers within a given area. For example, in addition to state and local sources, 62 federal programs provide funds for human services transit. This often leads to fragmented, inefficient service. In many cases, there are redundant services, lack of coordination among agencies and providers, service gaps and underutilized vehicles from multiple programs covering similar geographic areas.

**Dispersed land use patterns create challenges to providing service in growing communities.** Transit systems and services must expand to meet the new demands of growing communities; however, it is often too costly and inefficient for transit to serve new, dispersed, low-density, single-use developments on the edges of cities or in the suburbs. To make transit service more efficient in these areas, transit-friendly local land use policies – which support ridership by creating mixed-use, compact developments – should accompany planned transit routes and stops. A dynamic local revenue source for transit is needed to initiate service in newly developing areas.

### Work to ensure the availability of adequate funding for existing transit systems

#### Urban transit systems outside Milwaukee and Madison

WisDOT will work toward providing state and federal funds to meet 60 percent of operating costs for larger urban transit systems, and 65 percent for smaller urban systems in order to meet rising operating costs and sustain current transit services. Additional state funds will be required to reach and maintain these funding levels. WisDOT will seek additional state funds, or a higher annual percentage increase in state funds, from the legislature to achieve desired funding levels.

#### Milwaukee and Madison transit systems

While other transit systems receive state funding for a certain percentage of operating costs, the transit systems in Milwaukee and Madison receive a fixed amount of state funds determined by the legislature during the biennial budget process.

Historically, these systems have received strong support from the state, which typically covers about 40 percent of their operating costs. Milwaukee and Madison also have high fare box recovery rates, which is the percentage of operating costs recovered by passenger fares. Milwaukee has one of the highest fare box recovery rates in the nation. However, despite these recovery rates and strong state support, revenues are not meeting the rising costs of these systems, leading to reductions in service.

**WisDOT will support and provide** *technical assistance for the creation of transit governance bodies such as regional transit authorities and for enabling new local revenue sources for transit systems.*

In Milwaukee, there have been no increases in the local or federal share of costs. Moreover, Milwaukee and Madison receive less federal funding than smaller transit systems due to their large size and the assumption that these systems have higher fare box recovery and dynamic local revenue sources. However, neither system has a dynamic local revenue source, and both rely on property taxes. In fact, Milwaukee is the largest transit system in the country to be funded by property taxes.

A non-property tax, dynamic, local revenue source at the regional level – such as a sales tax – offers a solution to Milwaukee and Madison’s transit funding challenges. If new transit governance bodies such as regional transit authorities and new, stable, local funding sources are enabled through legislation, money from these new sources could help cover rising costs that are not addressed by state and federal funds. This model works successfully for transit systems in large metropolitan areas throughout the country.

WisDOT will support and provide technical assistance for the creation of transit governance bodies such as regional transit authorities and for enabling new local revenue sources for transit systems. WisDOT is committed to continue its role as a significant finance partner for Milwaukee and Madison’s transit systems and will seek to maintain a significant state funding share for these systems. WisDOT will also support planned fixed-guideway systems in the Milwaukee and Madison regions.

### ***Fixed-guideway transit systems***

WisDOT will recommend new, separate operating funds for all new fixed-guideway transit systems, such as commuter rail, light rail or bus rapid transit services, that receive state operating assistance. This will ensure that funding levels are maintained for

existing public transit. For more information about fixed-guideway transit systems and their funding, see the policy in this chapter called, “Support the development of fixed-guideway transit services.”

### ***Work with partners to improve transit service coordination, eliminate inefficiencies and improve transit planning***

WisDOT will work to expand its role in facilitating communication and coordination among the many transit providers and funding agencies across the state.

The department will also seek to streamline and consolidate complex and disjointed funding and operating structures. In addition to more efficient operations, improved coordination will support more transit options for the public, improve access to jobs, and expand the area accessible by transit (including areas on the urban fringe).

To achieve this, WisDOT will:

- » Improve system efficiencies through cross-agency coordination of programs and funding
- » Take a pro-active role in the future of transit planning functions
- » Facilitate coordination between transit and other modes to provide intermodal connections

### ***Improve system efficiencies by coordinating programs and funding across agencies***

Coordinating existing transportation programs can provide more mobility options without increasing funding. This is especially important with respect to specialized and human services transit.



WisDOT will help maximize efficiency through coordination and collaborative partnerships and processes such as the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination, the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program and the New Freedom program.

***Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination.*** WisDOT is an active member of the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination. The council is responsible for working to eliminate state agency barriers to human services transportation coordination. It is charged with developing a statewide model for coordinating human services transit (including specialized transit) in Wisconsin.

The implementation strategies developed with this model focus on identifying ways to better manage human services transportation services and pool resources so providers can serve widely dispersed populations while remaining competitive. The

council's efforts focus on coordinating specialized and other human services transit statewide to reduce redundancies, increase efficiencies and improve customer service. Immediate coordination efforts include:

- » Establishing cooperative agreements between providers and organizations that fund or use transit services
- » Coordinating programs and consolidating services to share resources including facilities, funding, training, vehicles and maintenance needs
- » Improving communication, trust and flexibility between human services transit stakeholders
- » Focusing on the transportation needs of the individual

WisDOT will support the efforts of the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination to:



▲ *Figure 8-1: WisDOT will work to expand its role in facilitating communication and coordination among the many transit providers and funding agencies across the state. Improved coordination will support more transit options for the public, improve access to jobs, and expand the area accessible by transit.*

- » Identify opportunities to restructure current funding
- » Provide options in every county and access to key services statewide
- » Create an interagency coordination liaison position that will improve mobility choices through strategic partnerships and promotion of coordination and mobility management
- » Improve integration between transit systems and shared-ride taxi services via established transfer locations
- » Improve coordination among private transportation providers in the state
- » Improve outreach and communication with local entities, including using techniques to facilitate communication between state agencies and local organizations

***Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program and New Freedom.*** The Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program and the New Freedom program are efforts to improve transit coordination. In Wisconsin, both programs integrate several state and federal funding sources into a simple, coordinated process. This encourages local areas to work together to assess their transportation needs and develop options that address those needs. The Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination will build upon these and similar interagency relationships to achieve its long-term vision for maximum efficiency in transit funding and programming.

WisDOT will monitor the success of the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination, Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program, New Freedom and other collaborative processes in order to enhance existing programs or create new programs.

### ***Take a proactive role in future transit planning functions***

WisDOT will continue and expand its role in supporting public transit in Wisconsin by:

### **Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination**

Formed in 2005, the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination is a multi-agency partnership that includes:

- > Department of Veteran Affairs
- > Department of Health Services
- > Department of Workforce Development
- > Office of the Commissioner of Insurance
- > Department of Transportation

- » Assisting local governments, counties, metropolitan planning organizations and regional planning commissions in determining critical destinations for people in their regions, as well as ways to implement service to connect people to these destinations
- » Working with partners to develop a basic level of transit service for the state
- » Continuing to provide guidance on available funding sources to enable transit services to meet basic mobility needs and achieve this basic level of service
- » Reviewing the structure of the state operating assistance program for transit and recommending modifications in light of potential changes in federal funding, development of new fixed-guideway transit systems, new local funding options, and potential new funds for rural transit systems

### ***Facilitate coordination among transit and other modes to provide intermodal connections***

Intermodal connections can improve the performance of transit systems and provide more choices for transit users. In some cases, local transit does not adequately connect to intercity bus stops, passenger rail stations or airports. Moreover, some transit stops do not have sidewalks or safe bicycle access or facilities. WisDOT will work with public and private entities to create or



improve connections between public transit and other modes such as air, intercity bus, intercity passenger rail, bicycling and walking. See the policy in this chapter called, “Facilitate intermodal passenger connections.”

***Support existing and expanded urban and rural regional transit systems with new governance structures, funding sources and increased coordination***

WisDOT supports efforts to provide both urban and rural communities with transit options. This includes communities on the edge of urban areas that may want transit service. To improve transit options in these areas, WisDOT will:

- » Promote regional transit systems with coordinated services and new local funding sources through regional transit authorities and other measures
- » Seek new state funding sources for rural and regional transit systems

Special purpose units of government for transit, such as regional transit authorities, administer and fund transit systems on a region-wide basis. Regional transit authorities are common throughout the United States. WisDOT will support new statewide enabling legislation for the creation of independent transit governing bodies – particularly regional transit authorities – with revenue raising authority to generate new local sources of transit

**The New Freedom program**

New Freedom is designed to:

- › Support new public transportation services and alternatives beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- › Promote coordination between specialized and public transportation in all areas of the state

funding. WisDOT’s support for such bodies is based on their ability to operate efficiently and address mobility needs on a regional basis; this allows local jurisdictions to coordinate their efforts.

WisDOT will support legislation enabling the creation of independent governing bodies that:

- » Address mobility needs on a regional basis
- » Make various types of transit available in a particular region
- » Recognize both rural and urban service areas
- » Establish or expand dedicated local funding options and revenue-raising authority

**Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program**

The Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development and Transportation jointly sponsor the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program. Objectives of the program include:

- › Help low-income or unemployed people access jobs, retain jobs or advance to higher paying jobs by alleviating transportation-related barriers
- › Encourage the creation of local planning processes that involve all local stakeholders, including low-income individuals and the private sector



▲ *Figure 8-2: The Milwaukee Airport Rail Station is an example of how WisDOT will work with public and private entities to create or improve connections between public transit and other modes such as air, intercity bus, intercity passenger rail, bicycling and walking.*

- » Coordinate or merge services with adjacent participating communities
- » Encourage coordination among local governments and all regional transit services
- » Encourage intermodal connections

State policies to facilitate implementation of the new transit governing bodies will include:

- » Enabling new local funding sources that facilitate transit service expansion
- » Promoting regional transit systems and coordination of services
- » Providing state funding for fixed-guideway transit options without reducing funding available for other transit systems (see the policy in this chapter called, “Support development of fixed-guideway transit services”)
- » Seeking legislative and administrative rule changes requiring regional coordination and cooperation on proposed projects to receive funding

In addition to supporting new independent governing bodies for transit, WisDOT will support regional transit systems that coordinate specialized human services and other types of rural transit. This will open more services to the general public, create efficiencies in the provision of transit service, and enable coverage of more areas that span county and municipal lines.

One tool WisDOT will use for developing coordinated regional transit in rural areas is the federal Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program. This demonstration program provides funds for new, non-urbanized, public transit service projects.

In 2007 – the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program’s first year of funding – WisDOT received numerous applications from rural transit agencies seeking to add new service or improve coordination among different agency providers. This shows that the demand for rural transit service is strong. To continue improving and coordinating rural transit service, WisDOT will work to make the program permanent and will support its inclusion in the next federal transportation reauthorization bill. Ultimately, expanding state public transit funding to include rural areas will be necessary to achieve a fully coordinated system.

### Create a local non-property tax funding source for transit

Existing state statutes limit the options of local governments and regional transit authorities for raising local revenues for transit outside of the property tax. Wisconsin regional transit authorities currently do not have the authority to raise revenue or levy taxes. WisDOT will support legislative changes that will allow local governments and future regional transit authorities to have additional transit funding options available to them.



---

**WISDOT WILL SUPPORT REGIONAL TRANSIT SYSTEMS** *that coordinate specialized, human services and other types of rural transit, creating efficiencies in the provision of transit service, and enabling coverage of more areas that span county and municipal lines.*

---

*Seek new state funding for rural and regional transit systems*

WisDOT will seek new funds from the state legislature for rural and regional transit to increase coordination among Wisconsin's transit systems. Doing so will provide more mobility choices for people in rural areas by connecting them with destinations in urban and rural communities, such as medical care, county services, shopping and education facilities. It will also connect residents to the intercity bus network and other transportation modes.

► **SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:**  
*Support public, specialized and human services transit*

**Short-term (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Seek combined state and federal funding covering 60 percent of operating costs for large urban transit systems (other than Milwaukee and Madison), and 65 percent for small urban systems.
  - Continue WisDOT's role as a funding partner for Milwaukee and Madison transit systems and seek to maintain current state funding share.
  - Support creation of a new, separate funding category for new fixed-guideway transit systems.
  - Work to make the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program permanent in the next federal transportation reauthorization bill.
  - Continue to support legislative changes that will allow local governments to have transit funding options (other than property taxes) available to them.
  - Support and provide technical assistance for new statewide legislation enabling the creation of new transit governing bodies, such as regional transit authorities, with revenue-raising authority to generate new local revenue sources (other than property taxes) for transit funding.
  - Increase WisDOT's transit planning role and capabilities.
- 

**Mid-term (2014 – 2019)**

---

- Seek new state funds for rural and regional transit.
  - Conduct analyses to develop standards that establish a basic level of transit service in all parts of the state.
  - Review the structure of the state operating assistance program for transit and recommend changes as appropriate.
- 

**Entire planning period (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Improve system efficiencies through cross-agency coordination of programs and funding.
  - Monitor the success of the Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination, Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program and other collaborative processes to make enhancements to these programs or create new programs.
  - Assist local governments, counties, metropolitan planning organizations, and regional planning commissions in determining critical destinations for people in their regions, and ways to implement service to connect people to these destinations.
  - Continue to provide guidance, assistance and information about funding sources to meet mobility needs.
-

► **POLICY:**  
*Support development of  
 fixed-guideway transit services*

WisDOT envisions fixed-guideway transit systems in Wisconsin's largest urban areas, providing a robust and environmentally friendly alternative to congested roadways; greatly increasing transportation options; and promoting economic development. WisDOT will support development of fixed-guideway transit systems to improve public transportation in Wisconsin's major urban areas. To implement this policy, WisDOT will:

- » Continue state funding assistance for fixed-guideway transit studies
- » Support the creation of new transit governing bodies, such as regional transportation authorities, with revenue-raising authority to administer and fund transit systems
- » Develop a program to provide capital and operating funding assistance for fixed-guideway transit in major metropolitan areas
- » Study fixed-guideway services in other metropolitan areas

### **Background**

Several metropolitan areas in Wisconsin are exploring fixed-guideway transit as a way to improve their public transit systems, increase mobility options and promote economic development. Several studies are under way and some are in advanced planning stages.

Most proposed fixed-guideway transit systems are seeking federal funding through the Federal Transit Administration New/Small Starts programs. New/Small Starts are competitive federal grant programs that provide capital funds that typically amount to 50 percent of the



### **Fixed-guideway transit**

- › Operates on a permanent, separate right of way for the exclusive use of transit vehicles, existing freight railroad tracks, or on-street rail
- › Can be rail or bus rapid transit
- › Provides a convenient, affordable, and reliable transportation alternative
- › Attracts significant increases in transit ridership and improves transit service
- › Connects with other modes
- › Examples include commuter rail (diesel or electric trains), light rail (electric vehicles, including streetcars), and bus rapid transit (buses on exclusive right of way)

system's total capital costs. Seeking federal funding is a highly competitive process and requires considerable commitment by the local sponsor. To date, WisDOT has provided support for fixed-guideway transit studies on a case-by-case basis. With this new policy, WisDOT will be able to respond to the growing interest in fixed guideway transit by establishing a coordinated approach for participation in the funding, study and implementation of fixed-guideway transit initiatives during the planning period.



***Continue state funding assistance for fixed-guideway transit studies***

WisDOT will request that the Wisconsin Legislature restore funding in the Multimodal Planning Appropriation.<sup>6</sup> This will allow WisDOT to provide funding assistance for planning, environmental and engineering studies for fixed-guideway transit from a stable, dedicated funding source.

WisDOT will also continue to provide support and technical expertise to advance and implement projects.

***Support the creation of new transit governing bodies – such as regional transit authorities with revenue-raising authority – to administer and fund transit systems***

Because fixed-guideway transit projects often cross municipal boundaries, local sponsors of these projects need local funding sources and intergovernmental bodies to administer and fund the systems. Many fixed-guideway transit systems in metropolitan areas across the country are administered by regional transit authorities. WisDOT will support legislation enabling local governments to create new transit governing bodies such as regional transit authorities, which will have the authority to raise revenues to cover the local funding share of transit costs. These bodies could pay for and administer all modes of public transit in a region. For more

<sup>6</sup>The Multimodal Planning Appropriation allowed grants for studies and preliminary engineering of public transportation projects. It financed studies of interurban and intraurban area multimodal transportation, including analyses of the potential impact of a transportation facility on local and statewide economic development. The legislature eliminated the funding for this appropriation in the 2003-2005 biennial budget.

**Economic and land use benefits of fixed-guideway transit systems**

- › Attract economic development around station areas
- › Encourage investment due to their permanence and high passenger flow
- › Help promote land uses that meet a community’s smart growth planning goals, such as compact, mixed-use, higher density, and pedestrian-friendly development around stations
- › Enhance economic competition in regions by improving access to jobs, goods and services, and expanding both the labor pool and market area for businesses

details, see the “Support public, specialized, and human services transit” policy in this chapter.

***Develop a capital and operating assistance program to implement fixed-guideway transit in major metropolitan areas***

WisDOT will seek funds from the state legislature to support a fixed-guideway transit capital and operating assistance program. The funding will cover up to 50 percent of the total nonfederal share of capital costs, or up to 25 percent of total costs, whichever is lower. The state also will provide

**Commuter rail studies in Wisconsin**

Wisconsin has funded commuter rail feasibility and engineering studies during the past 10 years. The state has also studied and addressed commuter rail in several reports, including the *1995 Commuter Rail Policy Report*, the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Task Force on Passenger Rail Service, the *Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report*, and proposals in WisDOT biennial budget requests.

## Fixed-guideway funding

Transit programs in Wisconsin receive state operating funding based on a tiered system. The fixed-guideway transit-funding tier would be separate from bus transit tiers and have separate funds. The bus and shared-ride taxi tiers will be unaffected by any operating cost share policy with fixed-guideway systems, ensuring bus and shared-ride taxi services are not adversely affected by the funding of fixed-guideway systems.

operating assistance for fixed-guideway transit projects to help cover a portion of operating costs not covered by fare box or federal funds.<sup>7</sup> The remaining costs will be paid with local funds. To administer the funds, WisDOT will work with the state legislature to create a new funding tier for fixed-guideway transit under WisDOT's existing urban mass transit tier structure for transit operating assistance.

The following projects are in the planning phase, include state participation, and are considered priorities for implementing this policy:

- » Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail. Includes commuter rail from Milwaukee to Kenosha, connecting with Metra trains to Chicago in Kenosha (the locally preferred alternative)
- » Transport 2020 (Dane County). Includes commuter rail from Sun Prairie to Middleton (the locally preferred alternative) as well as other fixed-guideway alternatives and additional bus service

The following studies are under way and could include state involvement in implementation:

- » Milwaukee Connector Study (includes bus rapid transit lines and a streetcar circulator)
- » Kenosha streetcar expansion

<sup>7</sup> Fixed-guideway transit systems typically have a higher fare box recovery rate (many at 45 percent to 55 percent) than bus transit. As a result, the state may fund fixed-guideway transit systems at a lower percentage of total operating costs than is provided for bus transit.

Funded fixed-guideway transit systems will be connected to and coordinated with other modes such as bus transit and intercity passenger rail.

### *Study additional fixed-guideway services in other metropolitan areas*

Several metropolitan planning organizations' plans have identified additional corridors where new fixed-guideway transit systems could be implemented, including:

- » Somerset, Wis., to St. Paul, Minn.
- » Roberts, Wis., to St. Paul, Minn.
- » Eau Claire, Wis., to St. Paul, Minn.
- » Oconomowoc to Milwaukee, Wis.
- » West Bend to Milwaukee, Wis.
- » Saukville to Milwaukee, Wis.
- » Pleasant Prairie, Wis., to Chicago, Ill.
- » Burlington, Wis., to Chicago, Ill.
- » Walworth, Wis., to Chicago, Ill.
- » Madison (streetcar)

In addition, the *South Central Wisconsin Commuter Transportation Study*, completed in 2008, looked at several transportation alternatives for



---

### THE SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN COMMUTER TRANSPORTATION STUDY

*recommended several rail corridors for preservation as potential commuter rail corridors connecting Rock County with Dane County and Northern Illinois.*

---

addressing transportation needs in Rock County and connecting Rock County with Dane County and Northern Illinois, as well as new commuter bus, vanpool and park and ride services. These alternatives included bus rapid transit, commuter bus, vanpools, and commuter rail. The study recommended several rail corridors for preservation as potential commuter rail corridors connecting Rock County with Dane County and Northern Illinois. WisDOT will participate in further studies of these corridors and any additional corridors identified by metropolitan planning organizations.

#### ► **SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:** *Support development of fixed-guideway transit services*

---

##### Short-term (2008 – 2013)

- Continue to provide support and technical expertise in advancing projects to implementation.
  - Support legislation to enable the creation of transit governance bodies with revenue-raising authority, such as regional transit authorities.
  - Support legislation to enable dedicated local transit funding sources, enabling local sponsors to fund the required local share for fixed-guideway and other transit.
- 

##### Short- to mid-term (2008 – 2019)

- Request that the state legislature restore funding to the Multimodal Planning Appropriation so WisDOT can provide funding assistance for fixed-guideway transit studies through a dedicated source.
  - Create and implement capital and operating assistance programs with funding initially for systems already in the advanced planning stages. Priorities for implementation include:
    - Service between Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee
    - Service in Dane County
- 

##### Mid- to long-term (2014 – 2030)

- Participate in studies in cooperation with metropolitan planning organizations or local governments for additional fixed-guideway services in other metropolitan areas. Possibilities include Somerset-St. Paul, Roberts-St. Paul, Eau Claire-St Paul, Oconomowoc-Milwaukee, West Bend-Milwaukee, Saukville-Milwaukee, Pleasant Prairie-Chicago, Burlington-Chicago, Walworth-Chicago, Rock County-Dane County, and Rock County-Northern Illinois.
-

► **POLICY:**  
*Increase intercity travel options by improving intercity passenger rail service*

WisDOT envisions a 21st century intercity passenger rail system that links the Midwest region’s major economic centers. The system will provide connections within Wisconsin and to cities throughout the Midwest. This modern and efficient system will seamlessly integrate with other modes and serve as a crucial component of the state’s transportation system. The service will provide a sustainable transportation alternative that will enhance mobility and help grow the state’s economy.

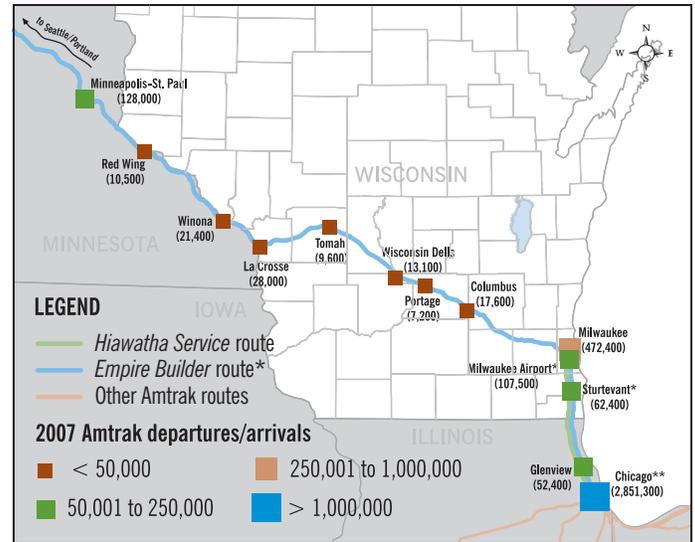
Wisconsin has made significant investments to achieve this vision and will increase its efforts by improving existing intercity passenger rail service and implementing new, enhanced intercity passenger rail service. Specifically, WisDOT will:

- » Continue to support and improve existing passenger rail service
- » Implement the Wisconsin component of the Midwest Regional Rail System
- » Establish a state rail station capital assistance program
- » Extend intercity passenger rail service to regions of Wisconsin not originally included in the Midwest Regional Rail System

**Background**

*Existing service*

As shown in Map 8-1, two passenger rail routes operated by Amtrak currently serve Wisconsin: the *Hiawatha Service* and the *Empire Builder*. Wisconsin and Illinois jointly fund the *Hiawatha Service*. The *Hiawatha Service* provides seven daily round-trips (six on Sundays) between Chicago and Milwaukee, with a one-way trip duration of 1 hour and 29 minutes. The *Hiawatha Service* currently posts one of the best on-time-performance rates of any Amtrak



\*Empire Builder does not stop in Sturtevant or at General Mitchell International Airport.  
 \*\*Chicago total includes departures/arrivals from other Amtrak routes.

▲ Map 8-1: Wisconsin Amtrak rail routes and ridership, 2007

**Intercity passenger rail policy**

The *Connections 2030* intercity passenger rail policy is based on the results and conclusions of several reports and studies:

- › *2004 Midwest Regional Rail Initiative Notebook and Executive Report*
- › *Milwaukee-Madison Passenger Rail Corridor Project Environmental Assessment*, June 2001
- › *Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report*, 2004
- › *Intercity Passenger Rail Corridors Feasibility Study*, 2002
- › *Milwaukee to Green Bay Passenger Rail: Feasibility Study of Route Alternatives*, 2001



### Improved intercity passenger rail benefits

- › Provides an alternative to congested roads, especially when connecting with major urban centers
- › Offers a safe travel option that can be cost- and time-competitive with driving and flying, especially for trips between 100 and 400 miles
- › Provides a regional travel option for those who cannot or choose not to drive or fly
- › Allows business travelers to work productively while en route to their destination
- › Improves Wisconsin’s economic competitiveness and supports the growth of high-tech and service sector jobs
- › Encourages community economic development, especially near train stations
- › Provides a transportation option that is energy efficient and environmentally friendly (fewer carbon dioxide emissions per passenger mile than private auto or airlines)

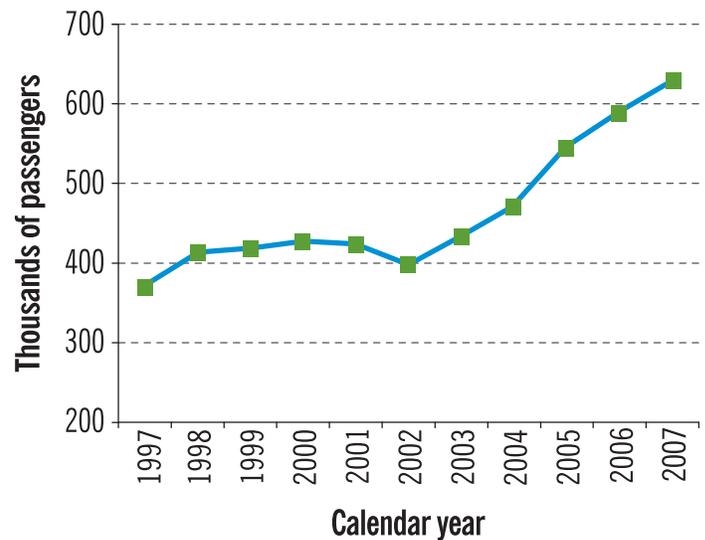
service. The *Hiawatha Service* has experienced robust ridership growth during the past 10 years (Figure 8-3). Through 2030, WisDOT will work to increase the frequency of service as funding allows.

The *Empire Builder* provides one daily round-trip between Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Seattle/Portland. Amtrak provides the *Empire Builder* service as part of its national network, without financial support from any state. While the *Empire Builder* is one of Amtrak’s more popular long-distance trains and is a valued component of Wisconsin’s transportation system, it does not provide robust corridor service between Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul due to its limited schedule and longer travel times. The *Empire Builder* also does not directly serve Madison, a major population center.

#### Wisconsin’s improvements to existing services and infrastructure

In recent years WisDOT has worked with Amtrak, Canadian Pacific Railway, local governments and private investors to make numerous improvements to Wisconsin’s intercity passenger rail service. These improvements include:

- » The addition of one daily round-trip and an increase in train seating capacity for the *Hiawatha Service*
- » Renovation of the downtown Milwaukee station



▲ Figure 8-3: Amtrak’s *Hiawatha Service* ridership

- » Construction of a new station at Milwaukee’s General Mitchell International Airport
- » Construction by the village of Sturtevant of a new station to replace the community’s previous facility
- » Grade-crossing improvements

#### The Midwest Regional Rail Initiative

Wisconsin, along with eight other Midwestern states, began investigating the concept of enhanced



▲ Figure 8-4: Midwest Regional Rail System concept train.

▲ Map 8-2: Proposed Midwest Regional Rail System (2004 MWRRI Business Plan). NOTE: Project alternatives will be chosen after consideration of environmental and community impacts, and may be influenced by decisions of the Transportation Projects Commission, the Legislature or the Governor, and through coordination with local units of government, with public involvement opportunities as appropriate.



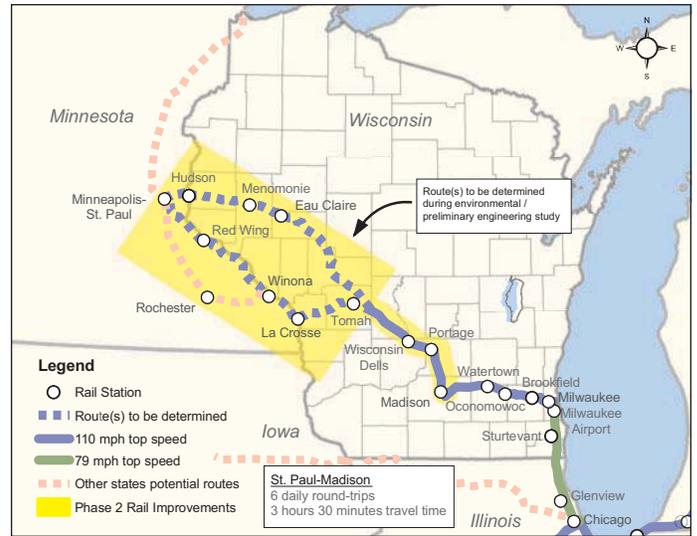
▲ Map 8-3: Phase 1 – Extend Chicago-Milwaukee service to Madison<sup>8</sup>

regional intercity passenger rail service in 1996. After extensive analysis, the states jointly proposed a regional intercity passenger rail system for the Midwest: the Midwest Regional Rail System. Assuming new federal and state funding is secured, the proposed 3,000-mile system will be implemented over a 10-year period.

The Midwest Regional Rail System will:

- » Improve existing rail corridors owned by freight, commuter railroads and Amtrak to accommodate both passenger and freight trains
- » Use Chicago as the network hub
- » Use state-of-the-art train equipment to provide improved reliability, speed and passenger comfort
- » Provide frequent service
- » Operate at speeds up to 110 mph

<sup>8</sup> Project alternatives are chosen after consideration of environmental and community impacts, and may be influenced by decisions of the Transportation Projects Commission, the Legislature or the Governor, and through coordination with local units of government, with public involvement opportunities as appropriate.



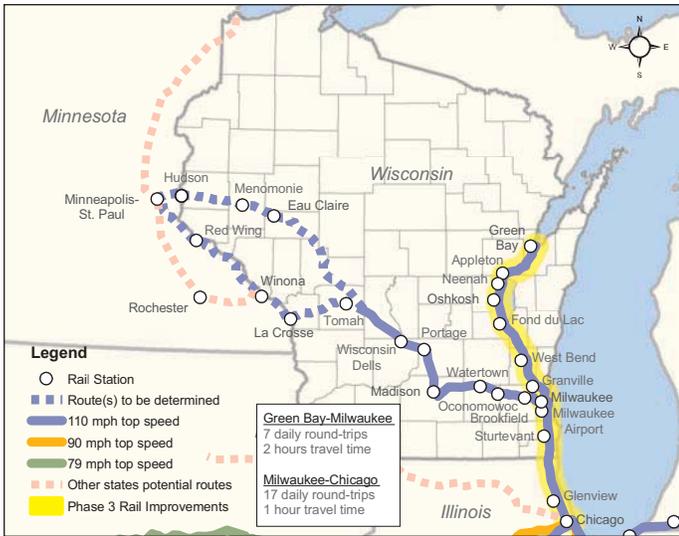
▲ Map 8-4: Phase 2 – Extend Chicago-Milwaukee-Madison Service to Twin Cities<sup>8</sup>

- » Include new or remodeled stations
- » Use a coordinated intercity/feeder bus service to connect to additional communities
- » Link, wherever possible, with air, transit, taxi service, and bicycle and pedestrian modes

Map 8-2 depicts the 2004 proposed Midwest Regional Rail System. Proposed station stops in Wisconsin include Sturtevant, Milwaukee’s General Mitchell International Airport, Downtown Milwaukee, Brookfield, Oconomowoc, Watertown, Madison, Portage, Wisconsin Dells, Tomah, La Crosse, Northwest Milwaukee, West Bend, Fond du Lac, Oshkosh, Neenah, Appleton and Green Bay.

An economic benefit study of the Midwest Regional Rail System completed in 2006 estimates that this intercity passenger rail system will provide significant economic benefits to Wisconsin:

- » \$1.80 in benefits for every \$1 invested in the system
- » 9,600 new, permanent jobs created
- » \$173 million in additional household income



▲ Map 8-5: Phase 3 – Implement Chicago-Milwaukee-Green Bay service<sup>8</sup>

- » \$704 million in property value increases as a result of new development near stations

Since adoption of the 2004 *MWRRRI Business Plan*, the intercity passenger rail landscape has changed, including the creation of new federal funding opportunities, stronger political support and vocal public support.

WisDOT is in a good position to capitalize on these developments due to the decade of passenger rail planning already completed. Moving forward, WisDOT will remain flexible and will consider new routes and system enhancements not originally included in the Midwest Regional Rail System that are viable and will benefit Wisconsin communities.

**Continue to support and enhance existing passenger rail service**

Wisconsin’s existing Amtrak service will act as the foundation upon which future Midwest Regional Rail System service will be built. Many infrastructure improvements to Wisconsin’s intercity passenger rail service made today, such as grade-crossing improvements and station renovations, will also serve Midwest Regional Rail System service in the future.

Moreover, current efforts to increase Amtrak service, such as increasing *Hiawatha Service* train frequencies, will help build a ridership base and provide additional insight into how the Midwest Regional Rail System ultimately should be designed and operated.

WisDOT will continue to support and enhance existing intercity passenger rail service by:

- » Providing continued financial support for Amtrak’s Chicago-Milwaukee *Hiawatha Service*
- » Continuing to fund a marketing program using print, radio and other media to promote the *Hiawatha Service*
- » Upgrading rail stations, purchasing and upgrading track, and improving roadway-railway grade crossings
- » Increasing *Hiawatha Service* train frequencies
- » Continuing to improve train equipment, service reliability and intermodal connectivity
- » Supporting intercity feeder bus service linking with Amtrak at the Milwaukee Intermodal Station (see the policy in this chapter titled “Improve intercity bus service and connections” for more detail)

**Implement the Wisconsin component of the Midwest Regional Rail System**

Building on incremental improvements to Wisconsin’s existing Amtrak *Hiawatha Service*, and rail infrastructure, WisDOT will significantly improve the state’s intercity passenger rail service by implementing the Midwest Regional Rail System.

Wisconsin’s future intercity passenger rail system will be implemented over the course of 10 years or more and will require a strong partnership between federal, state and local governments, as well as railroads and other private sector interests.

To implement Wisconsin’s vision of a 21st century intercity passenger rail system, WisDOT will:



## MWRRS Implementation in Wisconsin

Wisconsin’s expanded intercity passenger rail system could potentially serve all of the state’s most populous and fast-growing regions:

- › Milwaukee and Southeastern Wisconsin
- › Madison and Dane County
- › Green Bay and the Fox River Valley
- › West Central Wisconsin

About 76 percent of the state’s total population lives within 30 miles of proposed Midwest Regional Rail System stations.

- » Work toward implementation of the Midwest Regional Rail System through roadway-railway crossing improvements, track upgrades and other infrastructure projects and engineering work
- » Work with the Office of the Commissioner of Railroads to preserve intercity passenger rail corridors by discouraging new at-grade crossings of the corridors
- » Seek dedicated federal funding to cover up to 80 percent of the total capital costs needed to implement Wisconsin’s portion of the Midwest Regional Rail System (including infrastructure upgrades and new trains). Wisconsin will be responsible for the remaining share of the costs
- » Implement improved intercity passenger rail service in Wisconsin through a phased, 10-year construction period, as shown in Maps 8-3, 8-4 and 8-5.

### *Phase 1: New Service to Madison*

In the first phase of implementation, existing Milwaukee-Chicago intercity passenger rail service will

be extended to Madison. Trains will operate at speeds of up to 110 mph between Madison and Milwaukee, but they will continue to operate at speeds of up to 79 mph between Milwaukee and Chicago (Map 8-3).

### *Phase 2: New Service to Minneapolis-St Paul*

In the second phase of implementation, enhanced intercity passenger rail service will be extended from Madison to Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn. Trains will continue to operate at speeds of up to 79 mph between Milwaukee and Chicago (Map 8-4).

### *Phase 3: New Service to Green Bay*

In the third phase of implementation, improved intercity passenger rail service will be extended from Milwaukee to Green Bay. During this third phase, train speeds between Milwaukee and Chicago will be increased to up to 110 mph (Map 8-5).

### *Entire Planning Period: Consider opportunities to expand intercity passenger rail service to other regions of Wisconsin*

As previously detailed, the state’s initial focus is to connect Madison to Milwaukee and Chicago, then to expand service to Minneapolis/St. Paul and Green Bay.

Through 2030, WisDOT will consider opportunities for expanding intercity passenger rail service to regions of Wisconsin not originally included in the Midwest Regional Rail System. WisDOT will apply knowledge and experience gained from earlier implementation phases of the Midwest Regional Rail System in assessing future expansion of the state’s intercity passenger rail system.

Throughout the planning period, WisDOT will assist with future studies requested from other states, as needed. For example, WisDOT is currently involved in supporting an effort by Minnesota local governments pursuing intercity passenger rail service between Duluth/Superior and Minneapolis/St. Paul. In addition, WisDOT may study the potential for expanding the state’s intercity passenger rail system as part of future updates to *Connections 2030*. These studies could examine expanded service to regions such as North Central Wisconsin, Central Wisconsin and South Central Wisconsin.



▲ *Figure 8-5: WisDOT may study the potential for expanding the state’s intercity passenger rail system as part of future updates to Connections 2030. These studies could examine expanded service to regions such as North Central Wisconsin, Central Wisconsin and South Central Wisconsin.*

### *Intermodal connections*

To encourage a seamless, multimodal transportation system in Wisconsin, the Midwest Regional Rail System will link with intercity/feeder bus service, air service at General Mitchell International Airport and Dane County Regional Airport, and local and regional transit and taxi services. The Midwest Regional Rail System intercity/feeder bus routes will be implemented as part of the state intercity bus program.

Additional information about the Midwest Regional Rail System intercity/feeder bus routes and the intercity bus program can be found in the policy in this chapter called, “Improve intercity bus service and connections.”

### *Establish a state rail station capital assistance program*

Train stations are critical components of Wisconsin’s intercity passenger rail system. The stations:

- » Act as gateways to both communities and the intercity passenger rail system
- » Bring multiple modes of transportation together, allowing passengers to make seamless travel connections between trains, airplanes, intercity buses, local transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and taxi service

---

**THE MIDWEST REGIONAL RAIL SYSTEM WILL LINK** *with intercity/feeder bus service, air service at General Mitchell International Airport and Dane County Regional Airport, and local and regional transit and taxi services.*

---

- » Act as catalysts for community economic development

To maximize the benefits that train stations provide to Wisconsin communities, WisDOT will establish a new Rail Station Capital Assistance Program.

Working with local governments and the private sector, the program will be used to:

- » Upgrade existing stations
- » Build new stations
- » Ensure that all stations are accessible to people with disabilities
- » Encourage connections with other transportation modes such as airplanes, intercity bus, and local transit and taxi service.

► **SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:**

*Increase intercity travel options by improving intercity passenger rail service*

**Short-term (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Continue funding for the *Hiawatha Service* in partnership with Illinois.
  - Continue to pursue funding for train-air connectivity improvements at the General Mitchell International Airport station.
  - Increase frequency of the *Hiawatha Service* as funding allows.
  - Complete final design of the Milwaukee-Madison intercity passenger rail corridor segment.<sup>9</sup>
  - Construct and implement Madison-Milwaukee intercity passenger rail service.<sup>9</sup>
  - Complete environmental and engineering work on the Madison-Twin Cities corridor as federal funds become available.<sup>9</sup>
  - Begin environmental and engineering work on the Milwaukee- Green Bay and Milwaukee-Chicago corridor segments.<sup>9</sup>
  - Implement Midwest Regional Rail System intercity/feeder bus routes as part of the Intercity Bus State Assistance Program.<sup>9</sup>
- 

**Mid-term (2014 – 2019)**

---

- Design, build and implement the Madison-Minneapolis-St. Paul corridor segment.<sup>9</sup>
  - Design and begin construction of Milwaukee-Green Bay and Milwaukee-Chicago corridor segments.<sup>9</sup>
  - Implement the State Rail Station Capital Assistance Program to help fund improvements to rail stations.<sup>9</sup>
  - Construct and implement the Milwaukee-Green Bay and Milwaukee- Chicago intercity passenger rail service.<sup>9</sup>
  - Implement any remaining Midwest Regional Rail System feeder bus routes.<sup>9</sup>
- 

**Long-term (2020 – 2030)**

---

- Consider opportunities to expand intercity passenger rail service to other regions of Wisconsin.
- 

<sup>9</sup>Actions are contingent on receiving federal funding.

► **POLICY:**  
*Improve intercity bus service  
 and connections*

WisDOT envisions a network of intercity bus services that provides critical transportation connections between urban and rural areas and enhances Wisconsin's multimodal transportation system. WisDOT will improve mobility in Wisconsin by creating an intercity bus network that:

- » Connects Wisconsin's urban areas
- » Connects Wisconsin's rural areas to key education, health care, recreation, commerce and government centers
- » Provides intermodal connections to intercity passenger rail, major passenger airports, passenger ferries, park and ride lots and public transit
- » Improves performance of the proposed enhanced intercity passenger Midwest Regional Rail System
- » Builds on existing intercity bus routes

This policy will require new state funds in addition to existing federal funds and will be implemented in three phases. WisDOT will:

- » Support the development of a state intercity bus funding assistance pilot program that provides connections between metropolitan areas (Phase 1)
- » Implement an expanded state intercity bus funding assistance program that supports connections between metropolitan areas and feeder service to Midwest Regional Rail stations (Phase 2)
- » Expand the state intercity bus funding assistance program to include connections with key non-metropolitan destinations and rural areas (Phase 3)

### Intercity bus benefits

- › Provides a safe and reliable travel alternative
- › Connects urban areas to growing rural areas
- › Expands transportation choices for Wisconsin's growing senior population and other groups that have been adversely affected by the recent elimination of several routes
- › Provides connections to the state's universities and colleges, many of which currently lack intercity bus service
- › Improves intermodal connections by adding more bus service, locating bus stops adjacent to other modes, and coordinating with other modes
- › Complements intercity passenger rail policies by connecting passengers with the existing rail network and the proposed Midwest Regional Rail System
- › Provides a transportation option that is energy efficient and environmentally friendly (fewer carbon dioxide emissions per passenger mile than private auto or airlines)

### Background

Wisconsin's current intercity bus network has several deficiencies:

#### ***Loss of intercity bus service in Wisconsin.***

Several intercity bus routes have been eliminated in recent years, leaving many communities without service. This has resulted in decreased mobility for people in those areas of the state.

***Lack of convenient intercity bus connections between many metropolitan areas.*** Infrequent service, long waits for connecting buses, indirect routes and long trips make some connections extremely inconvenient for potential users. For example, an intercity bus trip between Madison and Wausau, a 143-mile distance, takes almost seven hours and requires a transfer in Milwaukee.



**Lack of intercity bus connections to key rural destinations.** There is no intercity bus service in much of the northern half of the state, southwestern Wisconsin or Door County.

**Inadequate or non-ADA compliant bus station facilities.** Some bus stations lack restrooms and adequate accessibility. Some stations are not open when buses depart or arrive.

**Lack of connectivity between intercity bus service and other modes.** In many cases, intercity bus service does not offer connections to passenger rail, public transit, passenger airports, ferries or park and ride lots. For example, many intercity buses serving communities with Amtrak service do not stop at the Amtrak station. Also, some intercity bus stops cannot be accessed by local transit services.

**Limited federal funding to assist the private sector in providing adequate intercity bus service.** Available federal funds for intercity bus routes typically cover either half of a route's operating loss (when ticket revenues are less than the cost to operate a route), or up to 80 percent of the loss. Private carriers are expected to cover the remaining part of the loss. This can be a disincentive for private carriers considering new services where there may not be an immediate profit even if there is a public need. Therefore, additional funds may be needed to provide new intercity bus services.

**Inability of the state to contract directly with intercity bus providers to implement new services.** Under current state statutes, WisDOT is not able to contract directly with private operators to provide federal funds for new routes. A local sponsor is required to apply for and

## Intercity bus funding program details

### Goals of selected routes

- › 1) Connect metropolitan areas that are not currently connected with direct routes; 2) Increase ridership; 3) Reinstate abandoned routes; 4) Connect key destinations (e.g. universities, medical facilities, tourist destinations); and 5) Provide intermodal connections (e.g. major airports, passenger rail stations, local transit centers, park and ride lots).

### Level of service

- › New routes will have at least two round-trips per day where feasible.

### Operating assistance

- › Combined federal and state funds will cover up to 100 percent of the operating deficit (total operating costs minus passenger revenues) for each route.
- › Private carriers will operate routes.

### Capital assistance

- › State and federal funds will be provided for the purchase of motor coaches that will be leased to private carriers.
- › Funding will cover up to 80 percent of bus station improvements or new facilities costs and will ensure ADA compliance. A 20 percent local share will be required.

### Market study and marketing

- › WisDOT will complete an intercity bus market study to evaluate the performance of the pilot routes and determine the feasibility of future route development and intermodal connections.
- › WisDOT will provide funding assistance for marketing new intercity bus services.



▲ *Figure 8-6: WisDOT will provide funding assistance to improve connections between existing intercity bus and passenger rail service at the Milwaukee Intermodal Station as a demonstration project using federal and state funds.*

administer the funds. This is another obstacle for intercity bus providers seeking to start new services, and for the state in implementing a systematic approach to intercity bus development. Most other states in the Midwest provide federal funds directly to the provider for intercity bus services. To address these deficiencies, improve the performance of the public transportation system and provide viable transportation alternatives, the state will play a greater role in providing intercity bus service.

### ***Support the development of a state intercity bus funding assistance pilot program (Phase 1)***

WisDOT will lay the foundation of the state's future intercity bus network by implementing a pilot program that:

- » Improves connections between major metropolitan areas that currently lack convenient or direct intercity bus connections
- » Improves station facilities and provides funds for new buses
- » Completes an intercity bus market study to guide future development of the intercity bus network
- » Facilitates improved intermodal connections and coordination

### ***Improved connections between metropolitan areas (four pilot routes)***

WisDOT will provide operating, capital, and marketing funding assistance using existing federal funds – 5311 and Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program funds – and new state funds for four new bus routes operated by private carriers (Map 8-6). These routes include:

- » Madison-Fond du Lac-Oshkosh-Appleton-Green Bay
- » Madison-Stevens Point-Wausau
- » Eau Claire-Duluth/Superior
- » Green Bay-Wausau-Eau Claire-Minneapolis/St. Paul

These routes will fill in some major gaps in Wisconsin's intercity bus network. The Green Bay-Minneapolis/St. Paul route will be implemented using Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program funds in 2008 with one daily round-trip; however, WisDOT will seek at least two daily round trips on all of these pilot routes. Other routes may be implemented under the program, which would improve access in rural areas.

As part of the development of this intercity bus program, WisDOT will seek a statutory change that will allow the state to provide funding directly to bus operators to provide needed services. This will support the systematic development of critical intercity bus services by eliminating the need to seek a local sponsor for implementing new routes with federal and/or new state funds. Existing intercity bus routes are expected to continue and are considered priorities. WisDOT will work with partners to continue these routes as part of the 2030 intercity bus network.

### ***Capital assistance***

WisDOT will also provide capital funding assistance for new buses, bus station improvements and new bus stations, where needed. WisDOT will ensure that all funded stations are accessible by those with disabilities. Funds will be awarded to stations accessible by local transit and other alternative modes.





▲ Map 8-6: Intercity bus network 2030

NOTE: Priority routes shown are subject to change based on further analysis. Additional routes not shown may also be eligible for state funds. Communities shown on the map have populations of approximately 5,000 or greater, or are key destinations along the routes. Buses could also stop in other communities not shown on the map.

### *Intercity bus market study*

WisDOT will analyze the performance of the state-supported pilot routes and conduct an intercity bus market study to ensure effective implementation of a permanent statewide intercity bus assistance program. WisDOT will use the results of the study to refine the Phase 2 and Phase 3 routes.

### *Intermodal connections*

Intermodal connections are vital to the success and efficiency of public transportation systems. Intercity bus and intercity passenger rail services are not always connected or coordinated; however, efforts to improve connections are under way. For example, the new Milwaukee Intermodal Station hosts both intercity bus and intercity passenger rail services, provides easy access to local transit and taxi service, and includes improved pedestrian access to the station.

WisDOT will provide funding assistance to improve connections between existing intercity bus and passenger rail service at the Milwaukee Intermodal Station as a demonstration project using federal and state funds. Funds will be made available for costs associated with coordinated scheduling, marketing, ticketing and increasing intercity bus frequencies. This demonstration project will be evaluated after two years and may be used as a model for future intermodal connection initiatives.

### *Implement an expanded state intercity bus funding assistance program that supports connections between metropolitan areas and feeder service to Midwest Regional Rail System stations (Phase 2)*

WisDOT will expand operating and capital funding assistance to new routes that:

- » Connect additional metropolitan areas with populations of at least 50,000. The priority routes where WisDOT would solicit service include (Map 8-6):
  - Madison-Dubuque
  - Janesville-Milwaukee (via Whitewater)
  - Janesville-Kenosha
  - Madison-Fond du Lac-Sheboygan
  - Madison-La Crosse (via Tomah)

- » Provide intermodal connections to Midwest Regional Rail System stations in Wisconsin. Most of the routes identified as the Midwest Regional Rail System feeder routes already have some level of existing intercity bus service. Additional funding would increase the number of bus frequencies on the routes and ensure direct connections to rail services to maximize transportation efficiencies.<sup>10</sup> Routes identified as the Midwest Regional Rail System feeder routes include (Map 8-6):
  - Madison-Janesville-Beloit-Rockford-Chicago
  - Eau Claire-Tomah
  - Green Bay-Manitowoc-Sheboygan-Milwaukee
  - Wausau-Stevens Point-Appleton
  - Marinette-Green Bay
  - Sturgeon Bay-Green Bay

The route alignments shown in Map 8-6 are subject to change pending the results of the intercity bus market study. Other routes not shown may also be eligible for funds.

### *Expand state intercity bus funding assistance program to include connections with key non-metropolitan destinations (Phase 3)*

WisDOT will expand funding assistance to additional routes that connect to key education, health care, recreation, commerce, and government centers in non-metropolitan and rural areas. Some connections are already being implemented under the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program in the short term.

Priority routes where WisDOT would solicit service (assuming they are not implemented in the short term under another program) include (Map 8-6):

- » La Crosse-Wisconsin Rapids-Stevens Point-Wausau
- » Marshfield-Stevens Point
- » Gills Rock-Green Bay
- » Hurley/Ironwood-Wausau

<sup>10</sup> These routes may be funded separately as part of the Midwest Regional Rail System.



Some routes, such as Marshfield-Stevens Point, may be better served by rural transit than by intercity bus. In these instances, WisDOT will work with rural transit service providers to connect with intercity bus routes. Final routes will be determined after completion of the intercity bus market study, and private operators will be able to apply for funding for additional routes not shown.

The illustrative 2030 intercity bus network (Map 8-6) provides a basic level of connectivity to metropolitan areas and many rural destinations; however, not all key destinations or cities with populations greater than 5,000 are served by this network. Intercity bus service to additional communities may be warranted in the future. WisDOT will conduct further analysis to determine future needs.

► **SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:**  
*Improve intercity bus service and connections*

**Short-term (2008 – 2013) PHASE 1**

---

- Create a WisDOT administered Intercity Bus Assistance Pilot Program by submitting a biennial budget request or by proposing new legislation that will allow the state to provide funding directly to bus operators.
  - Provide operating and capital assistance (with state and federal funds) for new service between selected metropolitan areas on four pilot routes with at least two round trips per day: Eau Claire – Superior; Green Bay – Wausau – Eau Claire – Minneapolis/St. Paul; Madison – Stevens Point – Wausau; Madison – Fond du Lac – Oshkosh – Appleton – Green Bay
  - Provide capital funding for new buses, station improvements or new stations, where needed. All funded stations must conform to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
  - Provide funding assistance for marketing new routes.
  - Provide funding assistance for coordinating intercity bus and rail connections at the downtown Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Increase intercity bus frequencies on select routes. Adjust schedules so that intercity buses meet trains. Coordinate ticketing, marketing and branding.
  - Conduct an intercity bus market study to examine the feasibility of new routes, stops and intermodal connections.
- 

**Mid-term (2014 – 2019) PHASE 2**

---

- Evaluate state Intercity Bus Assistance Pilot Program.
  - Provide operating and capital assistance (with state and federal funds) for additional routes connecting metro areas (>50,000) and the Midwest Regional Rail System feeder bus routes.
  - Provide capital assistance for station improvements and funds for marketing routes.
- 

**Long-term (2020 – 2030) PHASE 3**

---

- Provide operating and capital assistance (with state and federal funds) for additional routes connecting key education, health care, recreational, commerce, and government centers, and to continue to implement the Midwest Regional Rail System feeder bus routes.
  - Provide capital assistance for station improvements and funds for marketing routes.
- 

**Entire planning period (2008 – 2030)**

---

- Facilitate coordination between rural public transit and intercity bus routes.
-

► **POLICY:**  
*Advocate for improved air service  
 at Wisconsin airports*

Passenger air service in Wisconsin is and will continue to be a vital component of Wisconsin's transportation system and economy. WisDOT will advocate for improved air service options by:

- » Providing air service data and analysis to communities and carriers
- » Conducting economic impact analyses of airports
- » Supporting the continuation of federal assistance programs

### **Background**

Efficient commercial air service contributes to the economic growth and prosperity of many Wisconsin communities. Communities with airports that have direct air service are likely to attract more customers to their airports, including both passengers and businesses seeking to transport products and parts. These communities are also more likely to attract businesses that require access to major hubs.

Many Wisconsin communities have struggled to obtain and retain commercial air passenger service, often because they lack the population base and economic activity needed to generate enough passenger traffic. Some communities that are large enough to sustain a basic level of service have difficulty attracting enough air carriers to provide consumer choice, competitive fares or direct service.

Air carriers make market-based decisions about where to provide flights based on whether the service is projected to be profitable. Successful efforts to increase commercial passenger service to small- and medium-sized airports have involved a combination of financial incentives to carriers, and planning assistance to study the feasibility of new services.

WisDOT, in cooperation with local governments and chambers of commerce, provides planning assistance

### **Benefits of air service**

Efficient commercial air service is essential to economic growth and prosperity in communities throughout the state. Today's competitive economy requires products and parts to move quickly and safely. Communities with airports that provide direct air services are likely to attract more customers, including both passengers and businesses seeking to transport products and parts.



▲ *Figure 8-7: Efficient commercial air service contributes to the economic growth and prosperity of many Wisconsin communities.*

while relying on federal programs for financial incentives. Advocating for improved air service at Wisconsin airports is both complex and challenging.

Air services nationwide are substantially market driven and volatile in today's economy. Deregulation, the development of hub-and-spoke service networks, the growth of budget airlines, and rising fuel costs all have contributed to changes in air service.

Building upon the federal grants and local programs available to encourage air service, WisDOT also focuses on providing federal and state funding to maintain and improve airport infrastructure, to promote safe air travel to and from Wisconsin.



In addition to advocating for improved air service, WisDOT will fund improvements to airport facilities and infrastructure to create more jet airplane capable airports (see the “Improve airport facilities and infrastructure to create more jet airplane capable airports” policy in Chapter 7, *Foster Wisconsin’s Economic Growth*). The policy in this chapter focuses on advocating improved air service at all Wisconsin airports.

### ***Providing air service data and analysis to communities and carriers***

WisDOT will continue to participate in air service studies and provide aviation information to communities, airport owners and planners. Data and analyses help show the benefits of more frequent and more direct service. The air service studies help the state and the state’s airports anticipate future air traffic flow. For example, WisDOT completed the 2003 Tier 2 Air Service Study, which explored ways to increase the commercial use of perimeter airports outside the Twin Cities metropolitan region.

### ***Conducting economic impact analyses of airports***

WisDOT will continue to conduct analyses for communities on the economic impact of airports. Economic impact studies provide valuable information to local governments about the benefits of commercial

service. Results may encourage them to pursue additional direct service at their airports.

### ***Supporting the continuation of federal assistance programs***

The federal government provides financial assistance to eligible airports looking to improve service. Assistance is primarily provided through two programs: the Small Community Air Service Development Program and the Essential Air Service Program.

The Small Community Air Service Development Program provides \$20 million annually in competitive grants to communities around the nation to bolster their air service. Communities have flexibility in how they use their grants to improve air service. The Essential Air Service Program helps to maintain a link between smaller communities and larger hub airports. Small airports with too few passengers can seek federal assistance to maintain carrier service. WisDOT will support the continuation of these federal assistance programs. Although no state funding is currently available to help Wisconsin airports to attract and provide direct air service, the state may seek opportunities to become involved during the planning period.

Because efficient air service to and from Wisconsin is important, WisDOT may need to study options to help state airports address their service needs.

## **► SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:** *Advocate for improved air service at Wisconsin airports*

### **Short-term (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Monitor the state’s air service needs and how well they are being met.
  - Participate in local and regional air service studies.
  - Promote the use of federal programs, such as the Small Community Air Service Development Program and the Essential Air Service Program, to assist communities and airports in their efforts to improve service.
- 

### **Mid- to long-term (2014 – 2030)**

---

- Consider providing state funding if local and federal efforts to assist airports with their service needs are not effective in providing efficient air travel into and out of Wisconsin.
-

► **POLICY:**  
*Support bicycle and pedestrian facilities and plans*

WisDOT envisions a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian network that provides an alternative travel option for Wisconsin's residents and visitors while improving access to and from other transportation modes. This involves making biking and walking safer and more convenient. WisDOT will continue to promote bicycle and pedestrian travel by improving connections and expanding bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as by working collaboratively with communities and counties. To implement this policy WisDOT will:

- » Implement state bicycle and pedestrian plan goals and objectives
- » Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities in state and federally funded projects, following the federal "Complete Streets" policy
- » Implement identified bikeways in corridors and on the Wisconsin bicycle plan map

## Background

Bicycle and pedestrian modes – which account for 8.7 percent of all trips in Wisconsin – will continue to be significant components of the state's multimodal transportation system.<sup>11</sup>

Walking is part of almost all trips and vital to accessing other modes. To reach your car or your destination after parking, walking is usually required. Similarly, walking is vital to transit. People cannot easily get to bus stops without sidewalks. Meanwhile, bike use comprises 1.3 percent of all trips.<sup>12</sup> Bicycling is important to many Wisconsin communities, especially those with colleges and universities.

<sup>11</sup> 2001 National Household Travel Survey

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## Major funding sources for bike and pedestrian projects include

- › Transportation Enhancement grants for local projects
- › Bike and Pedestrian Facilities Program
- › State Highway Rehabilitation Program and various federal programs (Surface Transportation Program, National Highway System Program, Federal Bridge Program, etc.), when accommodations are added or upgraded as part of a scheduled highway, street or bridge project
- › Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Program for projects in nonattainment areas
- › Metropolitan planning organization-supported bike and pedestrian projects, funded through the Surface Transportation – Urban Program

## Implement bicycle and pedestrian plan goals and objectives

WisDOT's 1998 *Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020* and its 2002 *Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020* committed the department to routinely considering bicyclists and pedestrians in roadway designs. Increasing trips and decreasing crashes for each mode are statewide goals in both plans and apply equally to communities and WisDOT activities.

To implement the goals and objectives in the bicycle and pedestrian plans, as well as in this plan, WisDOT will:

- » Increase accommodations for pedestrians along and across state highways
  - Continue to collaborate with local governments to provide sidewalks on new state highway projects and reconstruction projects
  - Minimize barriers to bicyclists and pedestrians in the design of transportation facilities by including space for both modes when designing bridges





▲ *Figure 8-8: Walking is part of almost all trips and is vital to accessing other modes. To reach your car or your destination after parking or public transit, walking is usually required.*

- » Plan, design and promote new transportation facilities to accommodate pedestrians
- » Support multi-use trails that meet corridor bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs, as identified in the state bicycle plan and corridor plans
- » Provide assistance to communities and counties, which may include:
  - Planning and designing bicycle and pedestrian facilities
  - Providing safety resources and strategies
  - Providing demonstration funds to local communities to determine which efforts encourage more and safer bicycle and pedestrian travel
- » Promote safety by expanding education activities such as driver licensing and training, bicycle and pedestrian safety education, traffic law enforcement, and public service information

- » Expand and improve a statewide network of bicycle-friendly roadways, including those in urban areas
- » Continue to monitor and analyze bicycle and pedestrian crash data
- » Improve enforcement of laws to prevent dangerous and illegal behavior by motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. Update traffic laws that impact bicycling and walking based on the current version of the national Uniform Vehicle Code, which is intended to bring about consistencies among traffic laws from state to state
- » Update the Wisconsin bicycle map to include new bikeways and roadway conditions and facilities affecting cyclists
- » Provide new facilities to accommodate and encourage bicyclists
- » Encourage school districts to examine the traffic impacts of expansion and new construction, and to identify site plans that support safe bicycling and walking to school
- » Complete the *Pedestrian Best Practices Resources Guide*

***Include bicycle and pedestrian facilities on state and federally funded projects, following the federal ‘Complete Streets’ policy***

The Federal Highway Administration’s 2001 “Mainstreaming” policy calls for the inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in every federally funded project, unless no need exists or the cost is excessively disproportionate to expected use. This policy is now commonly known as the “Complete Streets” policy.

WisDOT follows this policy for all federally funded projects and will formally adopt and expand the policy to include projects that receive state funding. Appropriate manuals and other department documents will be updated to reflect this formal

## “Complete Streets”

The “Complete Streets” policy enhances bicycle and pedestrian access and safety, and can also benefit other modes, including improved accommodations for transit.

adoption as well as modifications to standards. WisDOT will also work with local governments to follow this policy for locally funded projects.

The “Complete Streets” policy goal is to create roadways that are safe and accessible to all users, especially users of alternative modes. WisDOT will design a process to increase the number of facilities that are safe for all users, similar to the federal model. In addition, WisDOT will evaluate and work to expand opportunities to include

bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on urban state trunk highway projects where feasible.

WisDOT will continue to use ADA design guidelines and the Community Sensitive Solutions concept (see “Continue Community Sensitive Solutions efforts” policy in Chapter 10, *Preserve Wisconsin’s Quality of Life*) as tools to implement the federal policy and improve consideration of walking and bicycling on urban state highway projects.

### ***Implement identified bikeways in corridors and on bicycle plan map***

WisDOT will implement projects consistent with the state bicycle plan map. The bicycle plan map promotes system connectivity and identifies new bike routes along state highway corridors that connect high bike traffic generators, such as many state parks and communities that have more than 5,000 people. WisDOT will also identify other connections as state highways are reconstructed.



▲ *Figure 8-9: The “Complete Streets” policy goal is to create roadways that are safe and accessible to all users, especially users of alternative modes. WisDOT will design a process to increase the number of facilities that are safe for all users, similar to the federal model.*

► **SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:**  
*Support bicycle and pedestrian facilities and plans*

**Short-term (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Adopt policy to consider bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on any state or federally funded project, consistent with federal “Complete Streets” policy.
  - Assess opportunities to increase bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on urban state highway projects.
  - Implement identified key bike connections along corridors in and outside of urban areas.
  - Complete and promote the Pedestrian Best Practices Resource Guide.
  - Expand education activities such as driver licensing and training, bicycle and pedestrian safety education, traffic law enforcement, and public service information.
  - Continue to collaborate with local governments in providing sidewalks on new state highway and reconstruction projects.
  - Minimize barriers to bicyclists and pedestrians in the design of transportation facilities by including space for both modes when designing bridges.
  - Continue to monitor and analyze bicycle and pedestrian crash data.
  - Work with local law enforcement agencies in targeting the types of motorist infractions that statistically result in a high incidence of crashes with bicyclists and pedestrians.
  - Encourage school districts to examine the traffic impacts of expansion and new construction to identify site plans that support safe bicycling and walking to school.
  - Support multi-use trails consistent with corridor bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs, as identified in State Bicycle Plan or corridor plans.
- 

**Short- to mid-term (2008 – 2019)**

---

- Provide demonstration funds to local communities to determine which efforts encourage more and safer bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- 

**Mid- to long-term (2014 - 2030)**

---

- Continue to implement identified key bike connections along corridors in and outside of urban areas.
  - Assess recommendations in statewide bicycle and pedestrian plans to identify any necessary updates and to evaluate progress in achieving the plans’ goals.
  - Update motor vehicle training materials showing motorists how to safely operate around bicyclists in a manner consistent with state laws. Update traffic laws that impact bicycling and walking based on the current version of the national Uniform Vehicle Code. This code is a national guide intended to bring about consistencies in traffic laws from state to state.
- 

**Entire planning period (2008 – 2030)**

---

- Identify other bike connections in corridors as state highways are reconstructed.
  - Update the Wisconsin Bicycle Map to include new bikeways and roadway conditions and facilities affecting cyclists.
  - Provide bicycle access and accommodations at park and ride lots and transit hubs, as appropriate.
-

► **POLICY:**  
*Encourage transportation  
 demand management strategies*

WisDOT promotes transportation demand management strategies to improve the efficiency of the transportation network within metropolitan areas (for example, to reduce congestion), and to improve mobility by expanding transportation choices for everyday trips.

WisDOT will encourage the adoption of these strategies by providing funds to:

- » Establish a transportation management association grant program to support integration of transportation demand management strategies with corridor plans
- » Assess opportunities to expand the RIDESHARE program
- » Develop statewide standards for planning, designing and constructing park and ride facilities

### **Background**

Transportation demand management strategies, such as carpooling, ridesharing, and telecommuting, comprise one method to help decrease urban congestion and improve mobility with more transportation choices. These strategies reduce the number of vehicles on streets and highways, particularly during peak travel periods. When roadways are congested, a small reduction in traffic volume can provide a large reduction in delays.



### **Transportation demand management strategies**

Transportation demand management strategies include:

- › Increasing bicycle and pedestrian travel
- › Increasing carpooling and public transit use
- › Encouraging businesses to alter work times so their employees can commute during off-peak periods
- › Encouraging the use of telecommuting and video-conferencing to reduce the need for employee travel

Specifically, transportation demand management measures that may seem minor can have a significant impact on congestion levels. Studies have shown that transportation demand management strategies are most effective in densely built business districts

**TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES** *reduce the number of vehicles on streets and highways, particularly during peak travel periods. When roadways are congested, a small reduction in traffic volume can provide a large reduction in delays.*



where parking is expensive and scarce. Employees may also be more willing to change their travel habits if they have employer support or if there are financial incentives. Similarly, employees faced with long commutes may be willing to carpool or telecommute. Individuals, agencies, businesses and other entities often implement transportation demand management strategies; however, they can also be coordinated at a regional level by a transportation management association.

***Establish a transportation management association grant program to support integration of transportation demand management strategies with corridor plans***

Transportation demand management activities can be coordinated in a region or corridor by

transportation management associations, which are private, nonprofit, member-controlled organizations. These associations are the most efficient way to implement transportation demand management strategies because their members typically include local business owners and politicians who best understand the congestion issues in their area. Some examples of transportation demand management strategies implemented by these associations include buying discounted bus passes for employees, installing bike lockers at job sites and providing preferred parking for van pools.

WisDOT will analyze transportation demand management measures as part of corridor plans or planning processes. To integrate consideration of these strategies into corridor management activities, corridor-planning processes will analyze the viability of such



▲ *Figure 8-10: One way in which WisDOT will encourage the adoption of transportation demand management strategies is by providing funds to develop statewide standards for planning, designing and constructing park and ride facilities*

**WisDOT WILL EDUCATE LOCAL LEADERS AND BUSINESSES** on the benefits of transportation management associations and strategies. Local leaders and businesses will be responsible for establishing an association or implementing strategies. Local sponsors will choose strategies to implement, and decide whether to use an individual measure or a combination of measures.

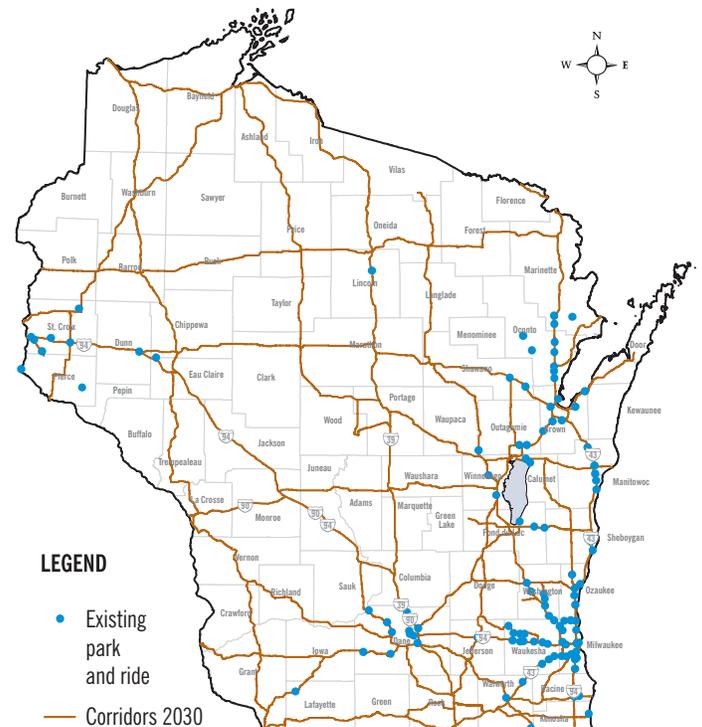
strategies and determine whether to recommend a transportation management association. WisDOT will seek state funding to establish a competitive grant program to fund existing and new transportation management associations. Preference will be given to those located in high-priority corridors as established by WisDOT through the corridor management process. WisDOT will administer the grant funds and facilitate educational effort.

In addition to establishing funding guidelines, WisDOT will educate local leaders and businesses on the benefits of transportation management associations and transportation demand management strategies. Local leaders and businesses will be responsible for establishing an association or implementing transportation demand management strategies. Local sponsors will choose strategies to implement, and decide whether to use an individual measure or a combination of measures. These can include education, ride-sharing, carpooling or financial incentives.

WisDOT will establish performance measures to monitor implementation efforts and determine future funding.

**Assess opportunities to expand the RIDESHARE program**

WisDOT supports a RIDESHARE program in southern Wisconsin. It is a free service provided by WisDOT to help bring commuters together. The program provides a list of possible carpool or vanpool options, as well as park and ride locations.



▲ **Map 8-7: Existing park and ride locations, 2007.** According to Wisconsin Statute 84.30(g), park and ride facilities are sites that provide parking and are within reasonable walking distance of a station or transfer point to access mass transit. Park and pool facilities only provide parking for carpools. For the purpose of this plan, park and ride facilities include both the park and ride facilities defined by state statute, and park and pool facilities.

WisDOT will continue to support the RIDESHARE program and assess opportunities and the resources required to expand the program statewide.



***Develop statewide standards for planning, designing and maintaining park and ride facilities***

Wisconsin has more than 100 park and ride facilities across the state (Map 8-7). These facilities provide drivers with the option to travel with others. Traveling with others can save individuals money that would be spent on vehicle maintenance and fuel. WisDOT can use park and ride facilities to improve a corridor’s efficiency.

WisDOT will develop standards to ensure that all WisDOT regions follow uniform guidelines for planning, designing and funding new park and ride facilities or expanding existing facilities. Future park and ride lots will be planned as part of the corridor management process.

WisDOT region staff will identify potential park and ride sites, particularly along corridors within urban areas or corridors that feed into urban areas.

**► SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:**  
*Encourage transportation demand management strategies*

**Short-term (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Educate WisDOT staff on transportation demand management measures and ways these measures can be used in congested corridors.
  - Encourage WisDOT staff to discuss the benefits of transportation management associations and transportation demand management measures with local officials and businesses during the corridor planning process.
  - Incorporate transportation demand management measures into the corridor planning process as an option to improve congested corridors and preserve corridors.
  - Assess opportunities to expand the RIDESHARE program statewide.
  - Develop statewide standards for planning, designing and maintaining park and ride facilities.
  - Seek state funding to establish a competitive transportation management association grant program for existing and new associations.
- 

**Mid-term (2014 – 2019)**

---

- Evaluate the effectiveness of transportation management associations and any transportation demand management measures implemented.
  - Identify transportation demand management best practices.
- 

**Long-term (2020 – 2030)**

---

- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of transportation management associations and transportation demand management measures.
  - Continue funding support to new and existing transportation management associations.
-

► **POLICY:**  
*Facilitate intermodal  
 passenger connections*

Successfully addressing mobility needs in the face of growing highway congestion and changing demographics requires an approach that connects all modes of transportation, including private autos, transit, commercial air service, intercity passenger rail, intercity bus, ferries, bicycles and walking. WisDOT envisions a multimodal transportation system that:

- » Provides seamless connections between modes
- » Creates more trip choices
- » Improves transportation operating efficiencies
- » Boosts economic development

WisDOT will help develop an integrated transportation network through intermodal connections by:

- » Improving coordination among transportation modes
- » Providing funds for intermodal facilities
- » Increasing the availability of alternative modes in both urban and rural areas

### **Background**

An intermodal transportation system allows travelers to conveniently complete a journey using more than one mode. An intermodal transportation system is most effective when it provides:

- » A seamless transfer between transportation modes
- » The ability to connect to an extended transportation network
- » A high frequency of service among the different modes

### **Existing intermodal facilities**

Existing intermodal facilities include but are not limited to:

- › Intercity passenger rail and intercity bus connections at:
  - Milwaukee Intermodal Station
  - La Crosse Amtrak station
- › Intercity passenger rail and commercial air service connections at Milwaukee Airport Rail Station
- › Local transit and intercity bus connections at Milwaukee's General Mitchell International Airport
- › Commuter bus, local bus and fixed-guideway transit connections at Kenosha Transit Transfer Center
- › Local bus and intercity bus connections at downtown transit transfer centers in:
  - Racine
  - Kenosha
  - Sheboygan
  - Appleton
  - Waukesha
  - La Crosse (under development)
  - Beloit (preliminary planning)

Intermodal connections can work in a variety of ways. Examples include:

- » A commute that involves driving to a suburban park and ride lot and transferring to a bus for a trip downtown
- » A trip that includes a seamless connection between intercity passenger rail and commercial air service, using a single ticket and allowing for checked baggage at the train station through to the final destination airport
- » A transfer between intercity bus and local transit at a downtown transit transfer center
- » A safe trip to school by walking and using transit, with sidewalk access to the transit stop



### Park and ride facilities and intermodal connections

Some Wisconsin park and ride facilities have successfully supported intermodal connections. Examples include:

#### Goerke's Corners park and ride lot in Brookfield

- › Commuter bus service (Wisconsin Coach Lines/Coach USA)
- › Local transit service (Waukesha Metro)
- › Intercity bus service (Badger, Wisconsin Coach Lines/Coach USA)

#### The Dutch Mill park and ride lot in Madison

- › Local transit service (Madison Metro)
- › Intercity bus service (Van Galder/Coach USA, MegaBus)

- » A coordinated schedule between an intercity bus and an Amtrak train connecting at an intermodal facility, which, in addition to improving convenience for the passenger, can improve performance and increase ridership for both the intercity bus service and the Amtrak service

#### *Benefits of intermodal connectivity*

Intermodal connections provide a number of benefits to transportation users, transportation providers, and the state transportation system as a whole. These benefits include:

- » Increased public transit ridership, leading to potential air quality benefits and emissions reductions
- » Mitigation of roadway congestion, providing relief to congested highway corridors
- » Improved financial performance of existing transit systems (resulting from increases in fare box revenues from increased ridership)

- » Efficiencies for transit providers and customers through reduced service redundancies and transfer opportunities that increase trip options

In addition, intermodal facilities can:

- » Create synergies that increase public transportation ridership and spur business development and investment in or near the facility
- » Serve as gateways to a community
- » Function as community centers

#### *Challenges to providing an intermodal transportation network*

Many communities across Wisconsin lack convenient connections between modes, even when multiple modes are present. For example, in some communities, the intercity bus and Amtrak stations are miles apart. In others, local transit does not directly serve intercity bus stops or does not adequately serve major airports.

Paying for improved intermodal connections also can be a challenge. There is no single federal funding source for intermodal projects; however, the state and local governments, airports, intercity bus companies and other private sector partners have been able to tap various federal funds for intermodal facilities such as the rail station at General Mitchell International Airport and the downtown Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Federal funding sources for intermodal projects might include the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), the New Starts grant program for fixed-guideway transit systems, the Surface Transportation Program, passenger facility charges at airports, and direct appropriations for intermodal facilities. Currently, there is no dedicated state funding source for intermodal facilities, local funds and private sector investment are other potential sources of funding.

#### *Improving coordination among transportation modes*

Many opportunities exist for improving coordination among modes and creating new intermodal connections in Wisconsin.



▲ *Figure 8-11: Intermodal facilities promote more than one transportation mode by making connections between them simple and convenient.*

For example, if an intercity bus stop is outside the local transit service area due to its location in a neighboring community, coordination can be as simple as contacting the intercity bus provider about moving the stop to a location within the local transit service area, or facilitating an intergovernmental agreement between two neighboring municipalities to extend transit service to the bus stop. WisDOT will facilitate coordination among modes, including improved communication between private and public entities.

Specifically, WisDOT will:

- » Consider coordination with other modes when evaluating projects that are applying for state and federal assistance such as Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program, Section 5311, and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality program funding
- » Provide funding and technical assistance to encourage ticket and schedule coordination between intercity bus and intercity passenger rail providers
- » Work with operators and providers of urban and rural transit systems, intercity bus, intercity passenger rail, airports and local governments to identify opportunities for new connections between modes
- » Provide technical assistance in developing specific strategies for creating connections between modes

As a demonstration project, WisDOT will provide funding assistance to create a seamless connection between existing intercity bus and passenger rail service at the Milwaukee Intermodal Station. Funds will be made available for costs associated with coordinated scheduling, marketing, ticketing, and increasing additional intercity bus frequencies. This demonstration project will be evaluated after two years and may be used as a model for future intermodal connection initiatives.

### ***Providing funds for intermodal facilities***

Passenger intermodal facilities allow people and goods to transfer from one mode of transportation to another. Examples include an intercity bus station with a local transit stop, or an airport with a convenient local bus stop. Intermodal facilities promote more than one transportation mode by making connections between them simple and convenient. Investment in intermodal facilities often leads to increased ridership and a better return on the state's investment in each mode. To support the development of intermodal facilities, WisDOT will:

- » Provide funding for the development of intermodal facilities with new state and existing federal money. Facilities eligible for funding include, but are not limited to, intermodal facilities at airports, new or renovated intercity passenger rail stations, and new or renovated intercity bus stations that include transit, parking, bicycle accommodations and pedestrian access
- » Work with local communities and the private sector to identify opportunities for intermodal stations, ensuring access for local modes (transit, bicycle and pedestrian), as well as intercity modes (air, rail, and intercity bus)
- » Facilitate public-private partnerships to develop new intermodal facilities, such as the successful cooperative effort to redevelop the Milwaukee Amtrak station
- » Continue to support park and ride facilities and encourage transit service at the facilities, particularly in urban areas



In addition to local funds and private sector contributions, the following state and federal funding sources may be used to provide funding for the development of intermodal facilities:

- » New state funding sources proposed in policies requiring legislative action
  - Rail station capital assistance program
  - Capital funding assistance for new or improved bus stations
- » Existing federal funding sources
  - Congestion Mitigation Air Quality funds (in federally designated air quality non-attainment areas)
  - 5311 capital funds
  - Other Federal Transit Administration funds
  - Surface Transportation Program funds
  - Federal appropriations

***Increase the availability of alternative modes***

WisDOT will increase availability of alternative modes by implementing the other policies discussed in this chapter:

- » Improve the coordination and availability of urban, rural and regional transit
- » Enhance existing intercity passenger rail service and implement new intercity passenger rail service
- » Improve urban and regional transit through development of new or expanded fixed-guideway transit systems
- » Expand Wisconsin’s intercity bus network by financially supporting new routes
- » Support new bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- » Advocate for improved commercial air service at Wisconsin airports
- » Encourage transportation demand management strategies such as ride-sharing and bus pass programs

WisDOT will implement these policies with a focus on strengthening the statewide intermodal network.

**► SUMMARY OF POLICY ACTION ITEMS:**  
*Facilitate intermodal passenger connections*

**Short-term (2008 – 2013)**

---

- Provide funding assistance to create a coordinated transfer between existing intercity bus and intercity passenger rail service at Milwaukee Intermodal Station, including coordinated scheduling, marketing, ticketing and increasing intercity bus frequencies.
- 

**Entire planning period (2008 – 2030)**

---

- Work with transportation providers, airports and local governments to identify opportunities for new connections between modes.
  - Provide technical assistance in developing specific strategies to implement connections between modes.
  - Consider coordinating with other modes when evaluating projects applying for state and federal funding assistance.
  - Facilitate private/public partnerships to develop new intermodal facilities.
  - Work with local communities to identify opportunities for intermodal stations.
  - Provide funds for intermodal facilities, including transit and intercity bus, and intercity passenger rail stations, along with intermodal stations at airports, with new, dedicated state funding sources and existing federal funding sources.
-