

Wisconsin Non-Driver Transportation Behavior Study

Objectives

- Understand the transportation needs, behaviors, challenges and opportunities for Wisconsin's non-drivers
- Examine relevant data that influence the available transportation options on non-drivers daily activities
- Identify non-driver preferences for possible transportation services, technologies and policies that could improve their mobility

Benefits

- Lay the groundwork to create a more inclusive transportation system that ensures equitable access to essential services and activities for all Wisconsin residents

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Background

Non-driving populations consist of diverse groups, such as aging adults, students, children, low-income individuals, and those with disabilities, as well as individuals who choose not to drive, lack access to a vehicle, or have limited transportation options. Non-drivers account for approximately 31% of the state's population, with rural areas experiencing the greatest mobility barriers due to limited transportation options.

This study explores the transportation challenges faced by non-drivers in Wisconsin, a population comprising aging adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income residents, and those without access to vehicles; to understand the transportation needs, behaviors, and challenges of non-drivers and their support networks, termed "non-driver-adjacent" individuals, who often provide rides or other transportation assistance.

Methodology

A literature review was conducted on topics of mobility, challenges faced by non-drivers, socioeconomic and demographic factors, technological impact, and potential solutions and strategies. A statewide survey was also conducted of 1,268 respondents, including 505 non-drivers and 763 non-driver-adjacent individuals, collected insights into the reasons for not driving, transportation options used, service satisfaction, and unmet needs.



Non-drivers of all ages make up 31% of Wisconsin's population

Results

The survey results reveal significant mobility challenges across the state. Non-drivers identified high costs of vehicle ownership (28.71%), lack of a driver's license (33.07%), and disabilities (23.71%) as primary barriers to driving. Public transit (32%) was widely used but limited in

“Understanding the dynamic transportation-related challenges faced by non-drivers in Wisconsin will help us address the unique challenges, improve mobility options and enhance overall quality of life.” – Ethan Severson, WisDOT

rural areas, while ride-hailing (5.8%) services were viewed as prohibitively expensive for routine use.

Non-driver-adjacent group reported time constraints and scheduling conflicts as major challenges in providing rides. Many noted the need for better public and community-based transportation options to alleviate their burden. Respondents expressed mixed satisfaction with existing transportation services. Family-provided (72.5%) rides were highly valued for their flexibility and reliability, but public transit (50.4%) and paratransit services (38.1%) received lower satisfaction ratings due to limited coverage, indirect routes, and insufficient service information.

Recommendations for Implementation

The research illuminated critical gaps in Wisconsin’s transportation network that hinder the mobility of non-drivers and their support networks. To address these issues, the study recommended a range of strategies including:

- Expanding public transit coverage and frequency, particularly in underserved areas
- Enhancing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to promote active transportation
- Developing affordable, community-driven ride-sharing programs
- Implementing financial subsidies to reduce the cost burden of transportation for low-income individuals
- Leveraging technology to improve service delivery, including real-time tracking and optimized scheduling for public and paratransit services

Interested in finding out more?
Final report is available at:
[WisDOT Research website](#)

This brief summarizes Project 0092-24-10
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