

NOTICE OF PROPOSED GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

DTIM BTLRRH 72

Pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 227.112, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation is hereby seeking comment on DTIM BTLRRH 72, 49 U.S.C. 5316, a proposed guidance document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION

Comments may be submitted to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation for 21 days by:

1. Department's website: <https://appengine.egov.com/apps/wi/dot/guidance-docs?guidDocId=DTIMBTLRRH72>

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Division of Transportation Investment Management
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
4822 Madison Yards Way
PO Box 7913
Madison, WI 53707- 7913

WEBSITE LOCATION OF FINAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

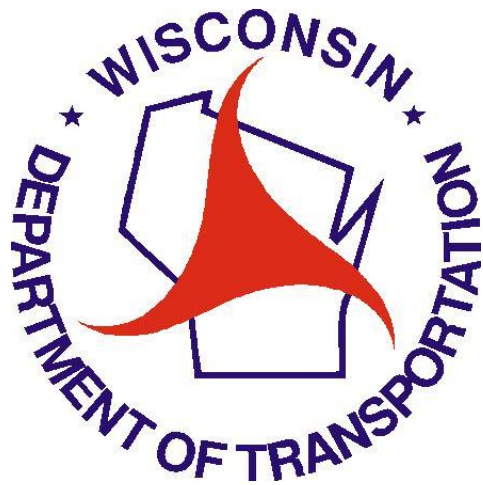
The final version of this guidance document will be posted at wisconsindot.gov to allow for ongoing comment.

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Employment Transportation in Wisconsin:

An Analysis in Response to Job Access Reverse Commute
(JARC) Program Changes



Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads, and Harbors

Wisconsin Department of Transportation

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) would like to thank Wisconsin agencies and organizations for answering questions and providing valuable information about employment transportation services, funding and barriers in Wisconsin.¹

We would also like to thank state Departments of Transportation staff in Alabama, Illinois, Michigan and Texas for insight into employment transportation in their respective states and how they are responding to changes in the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program.²

ABSTRACT

In response to changes with the federal Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) conducted an employment transportation research project, specifically looking at the types of services offered and their funding options as well as barriers to improved service. To obtain the information, telephone interviews were conducted with Wisconsin agencies and organizations and other state Departments of Transportation. This report identifies background program information, Wisconsin employment transportation service types, funding sources, unmet needs and barriers; and other state programs, funding and regulations. It also presents WisDOT policy goals and objectives should funding sources or program changes occur. The report concludes by offering recommendations at state and local levels for improved employment transportation in categories such as assistance, programs, employer coordination and regional transportation.

BACKGROUND

SAFETEA-LU – JARC PROGRAM

Overview

The Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program was authorized under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) which was enacted August 10th, 2005.³ JARC was codified under Title 49 U.S.C. 5316, but struck from the United States Code with the expiration of SAFETEA-LU on September 30th, 2012.⁴ This program provided formula funds to states to assist low-income and welfare recipients with transportation to employment.⁵ There were specific eligibility requirements, funding levels and regulations for the JARC program.

¹ See Appendix 1

² See Appendix 2

³ US Department of Transportation (USDOT), *FTA Circular 9050.1: The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program Guidance and Application Instructions*, May 1, 2007, Washington, DC, III-1.

⁴ US Department of Transportation (USDOT), FTA Office of Budget and Policy, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21): A Summary of Public Transportation Provisions*, August 22, 2012, Washington, DC, 1.

⁵ US Department of Transportation (USDOT), *FTA Authorization Fact Sheet: Job Access Reverse Commute*, June 28, 2007, http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/FTA_JARC_Fact_Sheet_Sept05.pdf.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility requirements can be divided into two categories: eligible recipients and eligible activities. Eligible recipients include direct recipients and sub-recipients. Direct recipients are public entities who receive the JARC funds from the federal government. The chief executive officer of the state or an official designee will designate the public entity that will receive and administer the funds.⁶ For small urbanized (population 50,000-200,000) and non-urbanized (population < 50,000) areas, this will be a state agency. In the case of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) is the direct recipient of the JARC funds for small urbanized and non-urbanized areas, and both Madison and Milwaukee are direct recipients for large urbanized areas.⁷ Sub-recipients are those who receive the JARC funds through a direct recipient and include private non-profits, state or local government authorities, and operators of public transportation services.⁸

JARC funds may be used for capital, planning and operating expenses for eligible activities.⁹ These activities include:

- Late night and weekend service
- GIS tools
- Car loans and car repair
- Subsidizing cost of reverse commute services
- Guaranteed ride home
- Bikes
- Expanding fixed-route public transit
- Subsidizing van purchase for shuttle service
- Ridesharing/ Carpooling
- Shuttles
- Intelligent transportation systems (ITS)
- Vehicle position monitoring systems
- Demand response van
- Vouchers
- Support for mobility management
- Automated regional public transit information

Funding Levels

Funding is allocated based on a formula that takes into account the number of eligible low-income and welfare recipients. The allocation percentages are as follows:

- 60% to designated recipients in urbanized areas (population > 200,000)
- 20% to states for small urbanized areas (population 50,000 - 200,000)
- 20% to states for non-urbanized areas (population < 50,000)¹⁰

For fiscal year 2012, the total federal apportionment was \$176,474,560. Wisconsin received the following amounts from that apportionment:¹¹

- Madison - \$173,354
- Milwaukee - \$757,466

⁶ US DOT, *FTA Circular 9050.1*, III-1.

⁷ US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Federal Transit Administration, *Table 6: FY 2012 Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute Apportionments*, table, 2012, http://www.fta.dot.gov/13093_7176.html

⁸ US DOT, *FTA Circular 9050.1*, III-4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, III-8 - III-10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, II-1.

¹¹ US DOT, *Table 6*.

- Small urbanized - \$897,962
- Non-urbanized - \$601,938

Funds were made available to the designated recipients and states for the fiscal year in which they were apportioned, plus the two years following. At the end of those two years, any unobligated funds were added to the following year's apportionment and redistributed.¹²

Regulations

Regulations allow for the funds to be transferred between small urbanized and non-urbanized areas but not from large urbanized areas to small urbanized or non-urbanized areas.¹³ The federal share of the funds may pay for no more than 80 percent of the net cost of the activity for capital and planning costs and no more than 50 percent for operating costs.¹⁴ The local share then pays for no less than 20 percent net cost for capital and planning and no less than 50 percent net cost for operating.¹⁵ Up to 10 percent of the apportioned funds may be used for administrative costs. Wisconsin's JARC funds are part of the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP).

WETAP

Overview

The Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP) is a competitive grant program that combines both state and federal funding for organizations that assist low-income individuals in getting to work.¹⁶ The program was officially formed in 2000 as a joint effort between WisDOT and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), but it is not in any state statutes or rules.¹⁷ In order to determine grant recipients, projects are evaluated in a federally mandated open, competitive grant application process. Grant decisions are based on evaluation criteria, ranking compared to other applicants, and available funding.¹⁸

Eligibility Requirements

The eligible recipients for WETAP funds are the same as the eligible sub-recipients for federal JARC funds.¹⁹ In order for sub-recipients to receive funds, their clients must be low-income, which for this purpose is defined as 200 percent of the federal poverty level.²⁰

Eligible activities for WETAP funds include the eligible activities for federal JARC funds with a few exceptions. Only some voucher programs may be funded by WETAP funds; these include vouchers for rides with volunteer drivers, taxis or human service agencies. Vouchers for existing

¹² US DOT, *FTA Circular 9050.1*, III-5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, III-7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, III-10.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, III-11.

¹⁶ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *WETAP Application Guidelines*, May 30, 2012, 1, <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/docs/wetap-guidelines.pdf>.

¹⁷ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Post-JARC: Utilizing TEAM and ETA Funding Sources*, August 22, 2013, Madison, WI.

¹⁸ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *WETAP Application Guidelines*, 7.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

fixed-route service and shared-ride taxis are ineligible for WETAP funds if the service is funded at all by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). In addition, fuel vouchers are ineligible for funds. Other ineligible activities include vehicle maintenance expenses for individuals, vehicle insurance subsidies, bike programs and capital purchases.²¹ Projects that are applying for funds must be part of a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan.²² In evaluating and ranking a sub-recipient's application, preference is given to projects with the greatest level of coordination.²³

In 2013, the largest numbers of grant recipients were for vehicle purchase/repair loan and mobility management programs. Vehicle loans comprised 73 percent of the total awards for non-urbanized areas and 40 percent for small urbanized areas.²⁴ Other recipient activities included vanpools, public transit, shuttle service and driver's license recovery programs.²⁵

Funding

WETAP funds are comprised of federal JARC funds, WisDOT's Transportation Employment and Mobility (TEAM) funds and DWD's Employment Transit Assistance (ETA) funds. The annual allocation for TEAM is \$332,600 (s. 84.24) and for ETA is \$464,800 (s. 106.26).²⁶ Grants are awarded for one year with quarterly reimbursement. The federal fiscal year (FFY) 2012 allocation is used to fund calendar year (CY) 2013 WETAP projects.²⁷ WETAP requires a minimum local 25 percent match which may be either cash or in-kind. Cash funding sources include state or local funding, private donations, income from advertising, concessions, loan repayment, or other non-USDOT federal funds. The in-kind match may come from donated facility space to operate the program, or labor or legal services contributed to the project.²⁸

MAP-21

Overview

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) was signed into law on July 6th, 2012 and went effect on October 1st, 2012 with the expiration of SAFETEA-LU on September 30th, 2012. It is a two-year authorization bill that is set to expire on September 30th, 2014.²⁹ MAP-21 presents challenges for employment transportation in Wisconsin due to the changes it made to SAFETEA-LU.

Changes

MAP-21 repealed the JARC program (49 U.S.C. 5316) and incorporated JARC eligible activities into the Federal Formula Grant Program for Rural Areas (5311) and Federal Formula Grant

²¹ Ibid., 3-4.

²² Ibid., 7.

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Post-JARC*, 1.

²⁵ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Calendar Year 2013 WETAP Projects*, <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/docs/wetap-2013.pdf>.

²⁶ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Post-JARC*, 1.

²⁷ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *WETAP Application Guidelines*, 9.

²⁸ Ibid., 5.

²⁹ US DOT, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)*, 1.

Program for Urbanized Areas (5307). In addition to land area and population, the 5311 and 5307 funding formulas changed to include the ratio of low-income individuals.³⁰

Funding

The funding allocation for MAP-21 to Wisconsin was \$78.3 million in fiscal year (FY) 2013 and \$80.0 million in FY 2014 for all transit programs. This includes 5307 funding that was \$47.2 million in FY 2013 and \$48.5 million in FY 2014 and 5311 funding that was \$15.51 million in FY 2013 and \$15.53 million in FY 2014. This is an increase in 5307 funding by \$700,000 and 5311 funding by \$2.0 million from SAFETEA-LU in FY 2012 to MAP-21 in FY 2013.³¹

Barriers

There are a number of barriers to employment transportation that the changes made by MAP-21 present for Wisconsin. The discontinuation of direct funding for JARC projects will mean that those projects that were eligible for JARC funding will now need to share funding with 5311 and 5307 projects. For 5307 funding for large urbanized areas, non-profits will need to work with the direct recipient for those funds rather than receiving funds through WETAP. Federal 5311 funds are complemented by state 85.20 funds to provide operating assistance for public agencies. While federal 5311 funds may be used for non-profits, the Wisconsin Administrative Code states that they are not eligible sub-recipients for 85.20 funds.³² This presents an issue since non-profits have been the largest group of sub-recipients for WETAP funds. The non-profits that received WETAP funds will now need to find a public entity that will sponsor the project in order to continue their activities with 5307 or 5311/85.20 funds. JARC projects will not be awarded on a competitive basis and no longer need to be part of a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan.³³ The competitive element to the application process ensured that the most feasible projects received the funds. The requirement that the project be part of a locally developed transportation plan identified that employment transportation was a need for the local area and ensured that it was part of a comprehensive approach to transportation.

METHODOLOGY

COLLECTION METHOD

Background Information

Background information for this report was gained through review of relevant sources including online documents, FTA Circulars and state statutes. Online research provided knowledge about the types of services that exist for employment transportation along with some of the barriers and needs. The FTA circulars and state statutes provided information about past and current program structure and regulations as well as funding levels and limitations.

³⁰ Ibid., 4-5.

³¹ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Federal Transit Funds to Wisconsin: An Analysis Comparing 2012 SAFETEA-LU to 2013 and 2014 MAP-21*, March 2014, Madison, WI.

³² Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Post JARC*, 1.

³³ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *Effects of MAP 21 on WETAP and its Recipients*, Madison, WI.

Surveys

Surveys were conducted to gather information from Wisconsin agencies and organizations and other state Departments of Transportation (DOTs). Questions for Wisconsin entities focused on the types of employment transportation services, their funding sources and barriers.³⁴ Questions for other state DOTs were similar, but also included a section on how their respective state DOTs are responding to the changes with the JARC program.³⁵ Phone interviews were the chosen method to conduct the survey in order to allow participants to elaborate on responses as well as allow the interviewer to ask for clarification if needed. An initial email was sent to the chosen participants to introduce the project and schedule a time for the phone interview. After receiving a response to that email, the questionnaire was sent along with the email confirming the time of the interview. Sending the questionnaire before the phone interview allowed the participant to get an idea of the information that WisDOT was hoping to gather. Notes were taken during the phone interview, which generally lasted from 20 to 45 minutes.

Participants

Surveys were conducted of 21 participants from Wisconsin and four participants from other state DOTs. Wisconsin participants were from a range of organizations including regional planning commissions, community action programs, public transit agencies and non-profits. These participants were chosen based on WisDOT staff input as well as internet research of Wisconsin organizations and agencies that have employment transportation.

To obtain participants from other states, an email alert was sent out via an existing national network of state DOTs that explained the information WisDOT was hoping to gather in regards to employment transportation and the JARC program changes. The Multi-State Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) is a work group within the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials that allows states to connect with one another to share best practices, receive technical assistance and obtain new ideas related to transit.³⁶ Through this we received responses from four states: Texas, Alabama, West Virginia and Connecticut. Based on the content of that response and responses to follow up emails, we conducted phone interviews with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) and Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). In addition to the MTAP alert, emails were sent to specific state DOTs based on background research about programs in that state. From responses to those emails, we conducted phone interviews with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Limitations

We recognize that there are certain limitations that must be taken into account. Within Wisconsin, the areas of focus were on existing employment transportation services. This doesn't address the areas of the state, which include the northern regions that have a general lack of employment transportation. There was also not a focus on the large metropolitan areas of Madison and Milwaukee, since these areas currently have more comprehensive public and private transportation options for employment.

³⁴ See Appendix 3

³⁵ See Appendix 4

³⁶ AASHTO, *AASHTO Multi-State Technical Assistance Program (MTAP)*, <http://scopt.transportation.org/Pages/MTAP.aspx>

ANALYSIS METHOD

At the completion of the phone interviews, the notes were compiled into categories to gain an understanding of how all the responses compared for both Wisconsin and other states. The categories for Wisconsin responses include types of services, marketing, unmet needs, barriers and funding. The categories for other state DOTs include programs, funding and regulations. In order to analyze the information that was compiled, a list of policy goals was drawn up. Once these goals were clearly defined, we were able to analyze the existing services versus the policy goals to derive recommendations for Wisconsin at both the state and local levels. Information from other state DOTs was taken into account in coming up with recommendations.

EMPLOYMENT TRANSPORTATION IN WISCONSIN

SERVICES

There are a variety of employment transportation services that are available in Wisconsin. These services include ridesharing, vanpools/shuttles, public transit, taxis, vehicle purchase/repair programs and employer tax incentives. A brief overview of each of these services will be discussed along with specific examples of that service in Wisconsin.

Ridesharing

Ridesharing is a general term that encompasses different types of services, such as carpooling, in which individuals share transportation often for commuting to work. It can work in conjunction with public transit to help fill gaps in service or be used in areas where public transit service doesn't exist.³⁷ Ridesharing is beneficial for those who may not have another way to get to work or who need to save on cost of transportation and also for those whose employment locations lack parking. Guaranteed ride home services can work alongside ridesharing to provide rides home in the case of emergencies.³⁸ The thought of not having reliable transportation in an emergency situation can be a concern and deterrent for people who are considering participating in a ridesharing program. Ridesharing does not generally have any eligibility standards.

In Wisconsin, ridesharing includes formal carpool matching programs such as Rideshare Etc. Rideshare Etc. is an online matching database run jointly by the Madison Area Transportation Planning Board (Madison Metropolitan Planning Organization) and WisDOT that provides transportation matching not only for carpooling, but also for vanpooling, biking, mass transit and park and ride locations. It is primarily marketed to people for employment transportation and helps connect commuters around the state. Rideshare Etc. offers a guaranteed ride home service in the form of taxi vouchers for registered commuters to use in emergency situations.³⁹

³⁷ Transportation Research Board, *TCRP Synthesis 98: Ridesharing as a Complement to Transit*, 2012, Washington DC, 1.

³⁸ Community Transportation Association, Joblinks Employment Transportation, "Fact Sheet #13: Guaranteed Ride Home Programs," *Transportation Toolkit for the Business Community*, http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/13_GuaranteedRideHomePrograms.pdf.

³⁹ Renee Callaway, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

Vanpools/Shuttles

Vanpools and shuttles are an organized type of ridesharing in which several individuals share vans or buses, generally to or from a common destination, such as an employment center. There are a variety of vanpool and shuttle services in Wisconsin that are organized by employers, transit agencies and non-profits. Eligibility requirements are determined by the provider of the service and funding source. Paratransit vanpools and shuttles generally have stricter requirements than others. The Kenosha Achievement Center runs a shuttle 365 days a year for disabled individuals to get to work at a navy base in Illinois. This shuttle is well used and at capacity for second shift workers. A downside with shuttle services is that they may return to their point of origin empty after dropping people off at work. The Kenosha Achievement Center has tried to sync work schedules, so people who need to travel in the return direction can use the shuttle, but hasn't been able to yet.⁴⁰

An example of vanpooling is Forward Service Corporation and their work with local employers to offer two vanpools. The vans hold up to 15 people each and travel 30-50 minutes one way. This service can be a benefit to people who don't have alternative transportation or who don't want to drive that far on their own. Since these vanpools have proven successful for Forward Service Corporation, they would like to expand this type of service in the future.⁴¹

Volunteers can be used as drivers for vanpools and shuttles to help keep the cost of the service lower.⁴² These drivers are generally not paid for their time, but they may be paid mileage. To assist in paying for the service, a passenger fare may be charged, which is determined by the service provider.⁴³

Fixed-Route Public Transit

Fixed-route public transit services are typically defined as bus, train or subway services that travel along an established route at predetermined times and are open for anyone to utilize.⁴⁴ Included in fixed-route services are express fixed-route services. These generally have fewer stops to ensure that people reach their destinations quicker. In Wisconsin, the bus is the most common mode of fixed-route service. Fixed-route can be an ideal form of employment transportation if the person lives and works along the route, and their work schedules align with the transit time tables. If neither of these are the case, another type of service may be needed.

Wisconsin has transit agencies that operate fixed-route buses that generally stay within municipal boundaries. Providing commuter fixed-route buses that cross municipal boundaries can expand the employee and employer pool. Examples of these commuter services in Wisconsin include: Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT), Janesville-Milton-Whitewater Innovation Express (JMW) and the Beloit Janesville Express (BJE). The SMRT bus connects three counties (Crawford, Vernon and La Crosse) and is used 60 percent for employment.⁴⁵ The BJE is a joint

⁴⁰ Gary Eckstein, Telephone Interview, March 24, 2014.

⁴¹ Mai Yia Yang, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁴² Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.

⁴³ Carolyn Feldt, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.

⁴⁴ Community Transportation Association, Joblinks Employment Transportation, *Fixed-Route Services and the Trip to Work*, <http://web1.ctaa.org/webmodules/webarticles/articlefiles/FixedRouteServices.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Peter Fletcher, Telephone Interview, March 19, 2014.

service with Beloit Transit and Janesville Transit and allows passengers to travel from anywhere in Beloit to anywhere in Janesville, which could open up more employment opportunities. The JMW was started for employment transportation to Generac, an industrial complex, with three trips that matched work schedules. It has since expanded to include UW-Whitewater.⁴⁶ Both the JMW and SMRT bus travel approximately 120 miles round trip.

In addition to fixed-route services, Wisconsin also has public transit agencies that operate deviated fixed-route services. These services can travel a specific distance off the normal route. Door-2-Door Rides in Door County runs five deviated fixed-route connections with Sturgeon Bay during the morning and afternoon. It travels at predetermined times along a specific route but it can deviate from the route up to a half mile in either direction. The service requires advance reservations and will allow a rider to prearrange a pick-up or drop-off point.⁴⁷

Feeder Services

Feeder services are used to feed into existing transit routes and provide connections between a transit stop and specific location, such as employment center or residence.⁴⁸ Feeder services can be useful in solving time and distance issues with fixed-route services by extending their boundaries and hours. In Wisconsin, the Valley Transit Connector is a demand-response service, which is run by a public transit agency and can be used to feed into the existing fixed-route bus system.

The Valley Transit Connector, a demand response van, was started in 2007 as a pilot project through a partnership with United Way Fox Cities and Valley Transit. It is an innovative program that has seen an increase in demand over the years. It is used 94 percent for employment and can provide rides to second and third shift workers who are unable to take the bus because of work schedules. The Connector can transfer passengers from a specific destination within the “Connector Zone” either to or from bus transfer points, or from point-to-point within the “Connector Zone”. The passenger fare is less if used in connection with the fixed-route bus system.⁴⁹

Taxi Services

Taxi services can be used to extend boundaries and hours of fixed-route bus service, similar to feeder services, or as a stand-alone service. Workers who live outside of public transit areas or whose hours are not compatible with the bus and don’t have access to a car may have no other option. Wisconsin has a variety of taxi services which include shared-ride, deviated fixed-route, demand-response and voucher systems. These services can be managed by public transit agencies which contract with specific taxi or van companies.

Two examples of shared-ride taxi services are Door County’s Door-2-Door and Fond du Lac’s JOBTRANS. The Door-2-Door shared-ride taxi has two main service areas, one around Sturgeon Bay and one in the northern area, which runs more limited hours. It also operates a mid-day taxi

⁴⁶ Terry Nolan, Telephone Interview, March 17, 2014.

⁴⁷ Pam Busch, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁴⁸ Community Transportation Association, Joblinks Employment Transportation, *Fixed-Route Services and the Trip to Work*.

⁴⁹ Deborah Wetter and Nicole Voelzke, Telephone Interview, April 2, 2014.

that connects the northern and Sturgeon Bay areas.⁵⁰ Fond du Lac's JOBTRANS shared-ride taxi is used 38 percent for employment. It serves areas that aren't served by the fixed-route bus but operates the same hours as the bus.⁵¹ This is good for people who work or live off the normal bus route but may not be a feasible option for second or third shift workers.

GO Transit runs a demand-response taxi program called Access to Jobs (ATJ), which provides employment transportation to low-income workers when the bus isn't in service or the location is not within walking distance of the bus route. Unlike Door-2-Door and JOBTRANS, which don't require passengers to use the service for employment, ATJ is intended to be used only for employment purposes and requires that passengers work 30 hours a week. The majority of the people do use the service in conjunction with the bus to solve issues with work schedule hours.⁵²

Door-Tran offers half price taxi vouchers, but due to the type of funding, they are only available to those who cannot use public transit due to a disability. Only 12 percent of the trips taken in 2013 were used for employment transportation.⁵³

Vehicle Purchase Programs

Vehicle purchase programs can be used for employment transportation when there are no feasible public transit options available. These programs provide individuals with a zero percent interest or below market rate vehicle loan, so they can buy a car to get to and from work. To ensure that the people who need it most and those who can pay it back are getting the loan, there are fairly strict eligibility requirements. The client must be low-income (200 percent poverty level), employed for a certain amount of time and certain duration, and provide some proof that they'll be able to repay the loan. In addition to providing the loan, many of these programs provide assistance with becoming financially stable.⁵⁴ Two of the largest programs in Wisconsin are Work-n-Wheels and Ways to Work.⁵⁵

There are a number of Work-n-Wheels programs around the state, including ADVOCAP and Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP) that were interviewed for this project. A number of these programs require a financial literacy class before loan closing and provide family development plans to help with other aspects of life. These items are important to make sure that people can afford the loan and provide them help so they become financially self-sustaining. In addition to the financial classes, SWCAP has recently started to report to the credit bureau, so the program can also assist in raising credit scores. To promote ridesharing, which was discussed above as an option for employment transportation, ADVOCAP requires that people sign up to rideshare, and SWCAP requires that people sign a statement saying they are willing to rideshare if they can.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ Pam Busch, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁵¹ Lynn Gilles, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁵² David Vickman, Telephone Interview, March 24, 2014.

⁵³ Pam Busch, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁵⁴ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.; Matt Mueller, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.; Sue Pomplun, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.; Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

⁵⁵ Work-n-Wheels may also be written as Work 'n Wheels

⁵⁶ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.; Sue Pomplun, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.; Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

Ways to Work is a national organization with 40 locations in 20 states. The Ways to Work vehicle purchase program is also called an overall economic self sufficiency program because, in addition to the vehicle loan, it provides financial education and counseling along with case workers that look at household issues. In a way, the car is the incentive that allows people to get to work and become financially stable.⁵⁷

While vehicle purchase programs may work for many low-income people without other options for employment transportation, they don't work for everyone. Since they are repayment plans and do require some money upfront along with gas money, the programs don't work for the extremely low-income credit distressed.⁵⁸ They are not options for people who are not ready to make significant life changes that will enable them to repay the loan.⁵⁹

Vehicle Repair Programs

Vehicle repair programs provide low-income individuals with repair loans or subsidies. For people who don't have other alternatives to get to work, this could be the only option besides vehicle purchase programs for individuals to maintain their employment. The specific programs will determine eligibility requirements, such as employment status and income level. For SWCAP and ADVOCAP, proof of employment is required to receive the loan.⁶⁰ Some agencies have specific repair shops they work with, while others will let the client choose. The Wisconsin Automotive and Truck Education Association program has specific participating facilities that offer discounted labor rates and parts. In addition to the participating repair facilities, the client could also choose to have the car repaired at a school facility. If this option is chosen the car will be re-inspected and certified at a participating repair facility.⁶¹ This provides hands-on learning for students looking to get into the automotive repair industry.

Employer Tax Incentives

Employer tax incentives can be a way to get employers involved in employment transportation. There are three benefit methods: employer-paid, employee-paid and shared-cost. For employer-paid benefits, employers pay up to \$245 per month for their employees to commute to work. This can be paid in the form of passes, vouchers or cash. Employers can then take the amount as a tax deduction. Employee-paid benefits allow employees to take \$245 per month out of their salary, tax free, for transit or vanpools.⁶² In shared-cost benefits employers can provide a portion of the cost of transit as tax free.⁶³ All of the benefit options provide financial incentives for employees and employers. In Wisconsin, both Valley Transit and City of Wausau Metro Ride offer Employer Tax Incentives through Commuter Choice programs, but participation is lacking.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Matt Mueller, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁵⁸ Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

⁵⁹ Matt Mueller, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

⁶⁰ Sue Pomplun, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.; Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

⁶¹ Wisconsin Automotive and Truck Education Association, "Wheels to Work 2010 Presentation", *Wheels to Work*, <http://www.watea.org/wheels-to-work/>.

⁶² Federal maximum benefit rate as of January 11, 2013.

⁶³ City of Appleton, "Commuter Choice: It Pays to Ride Public Transportation," *Valley Transit*, http://www.appleton.org/i/d/valley_transit/FAQ%20-%20Employers_2013.pdf

⁶⁴ Greg Seubert, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.; Deborah Wetter and Nicole Voelzke, Telephone Interview, April 2, 2014.

MARKETING

While there are a variety of employment transportation services in Wisconsin, it is important to understand that people may not be informed enough or made aware of all the service options available to them.⁶⁵ People are informed primarily online or through word of mouth and referring agencies and little through the traditional advertising forms such as television, radio, brochures, and posters.

Online

A website can be a good tool to inform people about employment transportation options. Rideshare Etc. is an example of a Wisconsin program that is primarily conducted online. This website-based program is user friendly and offers a useful FAQ section. However, it doesn't allow a potential user to see much information prior to registering, which may deter some people.⁶⁶ In order for people to get the most utility from the website, it is important to make sure that it is user friendly and provides detailed information. Good examples of public transit websites in Wisconsin include, but are not limited to, Valley Transit and GO Transit. Both websites are easy to navigate, provide detailed information about services, allow users to connect to social media and have a transit trip planner on the main page.⁶⁷ While websites can be good ways to reach many people, those who don't have access to a computer or smart phone cannot benefit. Additional forms of advertising can be beneficial to reach a larger group of people.

Promotions

Promotions can be a good way to encourage people to use certain types of services, such as public transit to commute to work. Valley Transit for example held an 'I Spy' Instagram contest. This helped promote their service by getting their name out on social media, while also providing an activity for people riding the bus as well as a chance to win free bus passes.⁶⁸

In Person

Word of mouth is a common way for people to find out about the types of employment transportation options that are available.⁶⁹ If people have a good experience with a type of transportation, whether public transit, vanpools, carpooling, etc., they are more likely to encourage others to use it. Specifically, for employment transportation, word of mouth is a good way to pass information along to co-workers or organize employee transportation options.

Mobility managers and agencies are also key ways to get information out about the different transportation options. Mobility managers work to coordinate services and providers to achieve efficient transportation. They are knowledgeable about the types of services available and can plan efficient trip options for getting to work.⁷⁰ There are many agencies which may have a

⁶⁵ Telephone Interviews.

⁶⁶ Madison Area Transportation Planning Board and WisDOT, *Rideshare Etc.*, <http://www.rideshareetc.org>.

⁶⁷ City of Appleton, *Valley Transit*, <http://www.appleton.org/departments/?department=fb4dcfb8d520>. ; GO Transit, <http://www2.ci.oshkosh.wi.us/Transit/>.

⁶⁸ City of Appleton, "Terms and Conditions of Valley Transit's 'I Spy' Instagram Contest," *Valley Transit*, https://appleton.org/i/d/valley_transit/Promotions_Events/Terms%20and%20Conditions%20of%20Valley%20Transit.pdf.

⁶⁹ Telephone Interviews.

⁷⁰ Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers, <http://wi-mm.org/>.

mobility manager on staff that can provide information about employment transportation. These include: job centers, temporary employment agencies, aging units, regional planning commissions, human or social service agencies and transit agencies.⁷¹ In addition to mobility managers, other staff at these agencies could provide useful employment transportation information.

Traditional Advertising

Traditional advertising forms include television, newsletters, bus signs, radio, brochures and posters. The vehicle loan programs, Ways to Work and SWCAP Work-n-Wheels, actively advertise using these forms. For example, SWCAP Work-n-Wheels puts posters up at car dealerships they work with, and Ways to Work uses radio and bus signs.⁷² There were few other organizations interviewed who use these forms to promote their services, partly because many lack the budget to actively advertise.

FUNDING

Employment transportation funding can come from a variety of sources including federal, state and local. Public transit, ridesharing, taxis, vehicle purchase/repair programs and mobility management have different funding options available.

Public Transit

Public transit agencies are generally funded using federal 5311 or 5307, state 85.20, a local match and fares. Other forms of funding could include selling advertising space on buses and private donations.⁷³ Regional public transit presents interesting funding challenges for the local share since it crosses municipal boundaries. The BJE and JMW local shares are funded through consortiums of members. These consortiums were founded because the Janesville budget doesn't cover the local share of operating expenses for these services. Funding through consortiums could cause issues because if one member decides to no longer contribute funding, the whole service is no longer feasible.⁷⁴ WETAP funds can be used for feeder and taxi services.⁷⁵

Ridesharing/Vanpools/Shuttles

Rideshare funding depends on the type of rideshare service. The Rideshare Etc. funding is split evenly between WisDOT and Dane County.⁷⁶ For vanpool and shuttle services, WETAP funds could be used.⁷⁷ Federal New Freedom (5317) or Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310) and state County Elderly and Disabled Transportation

⁷¹ Telephone Interviews.

⁷² Matt Mueller, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.; Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

⁷³ Telephone Interviews.

⁷⁴ Terry Nolan, Telephone Interview, March 17, 2014.

⁷⁵ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *WETAP Application Guidelines*, 3-4.

⁷⁶ Renee Callaway, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

⁷⁷ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, *WETAP Application Guidelines*, 3-4.

Assistance (85.21) funds can also be used if it is a specialized service for elderly or disabled.⁷⁸ Other sources of funding come from employers, fares and private donations.⁷⁹

Vehicle Purchase/Repair Programs

The majority of vehicle purchase and repair program funding comes from WETAP. These services count on WETAP funding to sustain their programs.⁸⁰ With the discontinuation of JARC, these programs will need to link with a public entity in order to use 5307 or 5311/85.20 funds. Other sources of funding come from the revolving loans and private contributors. Indirectly, funding comes from car dealerships who offer deals on cars for the programs.⁸¹

Mobility Management

Mobility management funding can, in part, be provided by state programs. Past funding has been provided by WETAP, New Freedom (5317), the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310) and the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program (STRAP).⁸²

UNMET NEEDS

From the interviews conducted of Wisconsin agencies and organizations, it is clear that not all needs are being met with the current employment transportation options. These unmet needs can be divided into categories of time and day, reverse commute, location, newly employed and regional connections.

Time and Day

The services available for employment transportation are not fully meeting the needs for second and third shift workers.⁸³ Public transit services are not compatible with some work hours because they generally don't have early morning or late evening operating hours. Even just a slight disconnect between work hours and public transit hours could prevent the service from being a viable option. If a person gets off work at the same time the last bus leaves or starts work at the same time the first bus runs, those few minutes make taking the bus infeasible.⁸⁴ Meeting the needs of these workers is a challenge for Rideshare Etc. because there are not many people in the database commuting those hours.⁸⁵ Employment transportation needs on weekends are also not being met. Public transit may not run on Sundays or may run fewer hours on the weekends. This can be a hardship for people who work weekends. Many service jobs that tend to be lower wage, have weekend hours.

⁷⁸ Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "Specialized Transit," *Programs for Local Gov't*, May 27, 2014, <http://www.dot.state.wi.us/localgov/transit/specialized.htm>.

⁷⁹ Telephone Interviews.

⁸⁰ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.; Matt Mueller, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.; Sue Pomplun, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.; Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

⁸¹ Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

⁸² Wisconsin Department of Transportation, "Mobility Management," *Programs for Local Gov't*, July 22, 2013, <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/transit/mobility.htm>.

⁸³ Telephone Interviews.

⁸⁴ Justin Svingen, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

⁸⁵ Renee Callaway, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

Reverse Commute

The JARC program was put in place, in part, to meet the needs for reverse commuting. However, this is still a large need that is not being met.⁸⁶ Public transit tends to serve more urban areas, so this type of service may not work for people who live in the city and need to commute to the suburbs for work. There are also fewer ridesharing opportunities for people who are reverse commuting. Ridesharing Etc. has a large database of people who are commuting from the suburbs but few who are commuting to them.⁸⁷

Location

There are unmet employment transportation needs in both rural and urban areas. In many rural areas there are few options for employment transportation other than a car.⁸⁸ This can be a large issue because a lot of low-cost housing is in rural areas, and many of these people are unable to afford a car.⁸⁹ There are also unmet needs in urban areas due to increased demand and bus schedules and routes. Changing demographics has meant more people moving back to cities. While this has increased the demand for services, the supply has not gone up.⁹⁰ In urban areas for people who want to take public transit to work, they are at the mercy of bus schedules and route locations that don't meet the needs of all workers.⁹¹

Newly Employed

The people who are newly employed or who are looking for work can have a lot of difficulty finding transportation options. Most vehicle loan programs will not accept someone until they have been employed for a certain amount of time. People may just need a way to get to work until they can get their first paycheck, but there are few programs that will support this need. The Kenosha Achievement Center is one of them. It has a Jumpstart program that will subsidize transportation for new jobs or training until the client receives their first paycheck.⁹²

Regional Connections

Regional connections are a large unmet need in many areas of the state. For example, providing better connections between the following areas could address some of the needs: Green Bay – Fox Valley (Highway 41 Corridor), Racine – Kenosha and Door County – Green Bay.⁹³ These are just a few of the areas around the state that could improve employment transportation options with regional connections. This is a problem for both employees and employers as public transit tends to follow municipal boundaries, but employment opportunities don't. Employees can't get access to jobs, and employers can't get access to the employees they need.⁹⁴

⁸⁶ Gary Eckstein, Telephone Interview, March 24, 2014.

⁸⁷ Renee Callaway, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

⁸⁸ Telephone Interviews.

⁸⁹ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014

⁹⁰ Mary Ebeling, Telephone Interview, March 13, 2014.

⁹¹ Darice Hannon, Email message from Carrie Porter, March 19, 2014.

⁹² Gary Eckstein, Telephone Interview, March 19, 2014.

⁹³ Telephone Interviews.

⁹⁴ Nick Musson, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.

The chart below provides an understanding of the greatest unmet employment transportation needs in Wisconsin based on the interview responses.

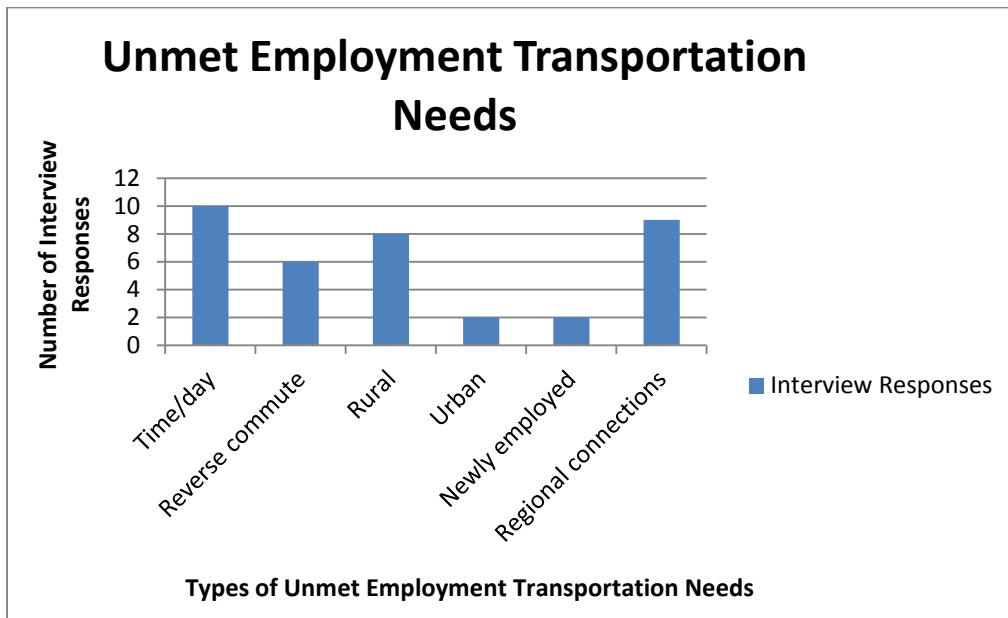


Fig. 1 Unmet Employment Transportation Needs

BARRIERS

There are significant barriers that contribute to being unable to meet employment transportation needs in Wisconsin. Barriers exist in funding, demographics, public perception, geography and decision making.

Funding

Funding is the largest barrier for improving employment transportation services. Funding barriers include lack of funds, funding changes, funding acquisition and use. The overall lack of funding for employment transportation makes it difficult to expand services that have been proven to be effective. Reasons for this include lack of staff to administer the service and low operating budgets. In addition to not being able to expand services, there is also a lack of funding to start new programs. A service provider may be aware of a need in their area but is unable to meet that need due to funding availability. The loss of the JARC funds has presented issues. Since Wisconsin statutes prevent state 85.20 funds from being allocated to non-public entities, the programs that received JARC funds may not be able to continue offering services or may have to cut back on services if they are unable to partner with a public entity for 5307 or 5311/85.20 funds.⁹⁵

Changes in funding, such as the change from SAFETEA-LU to MAP-21, make it difficult for service providers to predict how much funding will be available; therefore, they can't plan as

⁹⁵ Telephone Interviews.

accurately for the future of services and programs.⁹⁶ The way transportation funding is currently acquired presents barriers for improved employment transportation. The current funding based on taxes restricts opportunities because transportation needs often don't follow municipal boundaries.⁹⁷ It could be difficult to convince municipalities and tax-payers to use money from taxes to pay for employment transportation services outside of their municipality. Also, the federal and state fuel taxes have not been raised in several years and with fewer people driving, the ability to gain money through this tax has gone down.⁹⁸ Funding is not following the changing demographic trends, such as more people moving to cities and a larger demand for public transit.⁹⁹ A barrier to finding additional funding options is the low number of employers that see the need to contribute to funding employment transportation. Figuring out ways to encourage them to contribute is also difficult.¹⁰⁰

Demographics

Demographics, such as age, present only a small barrier for employment transportation, but are important to take into consideration. The aging population is a looming barrier, with seniors being less likely to want to ride the bus.¹⁰¹ Providing education about the public transit system could help in solving this issue.¹⁰² There is not one program or service that will fit all demographics needs for employment transportation. A barrier for ridesharing could be the lack of people in the database that match the need of an individual. Even if times don't exactly match, carpooling could be a viable option for employment transportation. However, if a person doesn't want to have to wait at all it could be difficult to make it work.¹⁰³

Public Perception

Public perception of transit options and lack of transportation can present barriers to improved employment transportation. When an individual is looking for work, there is the notion that if they tell their employer that they don't have reliable transportation, they may not get the job.¹⁰⁴ There needs to be more open conversation with employers about lack of employment transportation, so this doesn't present a barrier to gaining employment. Stereotypes of services can deter some people from using them. In certain cases, non elderly could ride on elderly transport, but they don't want to because that is seen as a service only for elderly. There are also stereotypes of public transit which could be due to unfamiliarity with the systems and solved through education.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁶ Justin Svingen, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

⁹⁷ Carolyn Feldt, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.

⁹⁸ Justin Svingen, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

⁹⁹ Mary Ebeling, Telephone Interview, March 13, 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Gary Eckstein, Telephone Interview, March 24, 2014.; Nick Musson, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.; Carrie Porter, Email Message, March 17, 2014.

¹⁰¹ Peter Fletcher, Telephone Interview, March 19, 2014.; Ann Schell, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

¹⁰² Lynn Gilles, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.; Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014

¹⁰³ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Sue Pomplun, Telephone Interview, March 12, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Lynn Gilles, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.; Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.; Greg Seubert, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

Geography

Geographic barriers for improved employment transportation exist in rural areas and across a region. Rural areas present barriers for employment transportation including poor cell phone access, terrain, low population and transportation options.¹⁰⁶ While ridesharing could be an option in rural areas, the poor cell phone and broadband access makes it difficult for people to use the online ridesharing applications.¹⁰⁷ The Driftless region of Wisconsin consists of hills and valleys that can be difficult to navigate in the winter and limit reliable transportation options.¹⁰⁸ This region also has low land use densities that can't support certain transit services, which contributes to the barrier of lack of transportation options.¹⁰⁹ In areas where the number of transportation options is limited, there is a greater need for vehicle purchase programs.¹¹⁰ If people tended to live and work in the same area, this may not be as big of an issue, but there is a large disconnect between where people live and where people work.¹¹¹ Employment centers are spread out over a region, and some are outside municipal boundaries which can limit public transit options.¹¹² The lack of regional transportation is a large barrier for successful employment transportation.

Decision Making

There are also decision making barriers to the regional transportation issue. A number of interviews discussed the belief that a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) would benefit employment transportation in Wisconsin,¹¹³ but Wisconsin Act 32 repealed the law that allowed RTAs in 2011.¹¹⁴ Reasoning behind the need for RTAs comes from the fact that it is difficult to create transit systems that cross municipal boundaries.¹¹⁵ There are issues deciding who is responsible for what areas and conflicting ideas about what works best.¹¹⁶ Transit is increasingly becoming a partisan issue, and there is some disconnect between what local, state, and federal support.¹¹⁷ There can also be barriers if those that are making decisions are not educated in transportation or fully aware of the needs.¹¹⁸ If the organizations and agencies who are operating the programs and services for employment transportation don't have a voice in the planning process, that can make it difficult to implement successful strategies.¹¹⁹ Other decision making barriers have to do with land use issues such as the disconnect between where people live and work, as mentioned in the geography section. Zoning, in this way, presents a barrier for

¹⁰⁶ Telephone Interviews.

¹⁰⁷ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Fletcher, Telephone Interview, March 19, 2014.; Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Mary Ebeling, Telephone Interview, March 13, 2014.; Ann Schell, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

¹¹⁰ Jeff Segebrecht, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

¹¹¹ Gary Eckstein, Telephone Interview, March 24, 2014.

¹¹² David Vickman, Telephone Interview, March 24, 2014.; Nicole Voelzke and Deborah Wetter, Telephone Interview, April 2, 2014.

¹¹³ Telephone Interviews.

¹¹⁴ 2011 Wis. Act 32 §1679

¹¹⁵ Telephone Interviews.

¹¹⁶ Ashley Nedeau-Owen, Telephone Interview, March 10, 2014.

¹¹⁷ Mary Ebeling, Telephone Interview, March 13, 2014.; Ann Schell, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.; Justin Svingen, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

¹¹⁸ Pam Busch, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

¹¹⁹ Matt Mueller, Telephone Interview, March 26, 2014.

employment transportation. Companies may choose to build where land is cheaper which is on the outskirts of towns in suburban and rural areas. Single-use zoning may also separate employment centers from residential areas creating a greater need for transportation options.¹²⁰

EMPLOYMENT TRANSPORTATION IN OTHER STATES

To gain an understanding of what type of programs exist in other states and how they are approaching changes to the JARC program, surveys were conducted of four state Departments of Transportation (DOTs): Alabama (ALDOT), Illinois (IDOT), Michigan (MDOT) and Texas (TxDOT). Information was gathered in the following categories: program type, funding and regulations.

PROGRAMS

Interagency

Similar to the collaboration between WisDOT and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) to form the Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP), both ALDOT and MDOT have worked with other agencies in their states on employment transportation. ALDOT and the Alabama Department of Human Resources (ADHR) have an interagency agreement to share expenses evenly to provide employment transportation with JARC funds. The JARC program participants are mainly public transit agencies, along with a few private providers. Much of the coordination for trip scheduling and certifying eligibility occurs at the local level between the transit agency and county ADHR office, with the state then handling the billing and payment. The collaboration in Alabama began under the Clinton Administration, in response to broader Welfare Reform efforts, and then used earmarked JARC funds continuing on to JARC formula funds. ALDOT is still expending JARC funds and hopes to continue the collaboration with the use of MAP-21 funds.¹²¹

MDOT has worked with the Department of Human Services and Michigan Works agencies on employment transportation, primarily in rural areas. When the JARC program began, the other agencies discontinued their funding. They had provided 50 percent and now that 50 percent was coming from JARC funds. With the changes to the JARC program, there have been talks about collaborating again. The other agencies are helping with funding for one large urban area, but no decisions have been made about collaborating in other areas.¹²²

Additional Programs

Both IDOT and TxDOT have worked with employers in their states on transportation. In Texas there is a plastic bag manufacturing company located in a rural area that has employees who reverse commute. JARC funds were used for transportation, but when those funds ran out, the company continued to pay for the service, since it had proven to be successful. Cargill is another

¹²⁰ Mary Ebeling, Telephone Interview, March 13, 2014.; Greg Seubert, Telephone Interview, March 20, 2014.

¹²¹ Joe Nix, Email message, March 24, 2014.

¹²² Kim Johnson, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

company in Texas that will be paying for its own transportation service when JARC funds run out.¹²³ These examples demonstrate the importance of working with employers on transportation issues and the benefit that the services can have for both the employee and employer. IDOT has a purchase of service contract with a manufacturing plant which is outside the scope of their traditional services. IDOT is also working on coordinating large urban service providers with rural providers to create better regional transportation.¹²⁴

FUNDING

Funding information from state DOTs took into account JARC, 5311 and 5307 funds, with special consideration paid to what is happening to funding with the discontinuation of JARC. Alabama is currently still using JARC funds apportioned under SAFETEA-LU and doesn't provide state funding for public transit.¹²⁵

In Michigan, MDOT will not be expanding JARC programs in rural areas using 5311 funds but will continue funding the existing programs with 5311. The state controls 5307 money for small urban areas, and it proposed keeping some off the top for JARC programs, but that idea was not favorable to agencies. For 2014, 5307 will be used to fund 50 percent of JARC services, with the other 50 percent funded completely by the state. MDOT will not provide 100 percent funding by the state after 2014. The large urban area, Detroit, has enough old JARC money to keep services going for two to three years.¹²⁶

In Illinois, IDOT will not be using 5311 funds to support JARC services once the funds from SAFETEA-LU are gone. Recipients of JARC funding will be given technical assistance to help find other funding sources and counseling on how to sustain a project without the federal funding component. They estimate that two-thirds of recipients said it will not be possible for them to continue their services.¹²⁷

In Texas, TxDOT has enough existing JARC funds to last through 2015. Currently, JARC funds do not go out through a regular formula. A more competitive formula based on ridership is used. Texas has made no adjustment to their state rural funding formula to include low income into the formula for 5311 funds. For 5307 funds, non-profits will have to go to small urban and urbanized areas on their own to try and partner with them. TxDOT is having ongoing discussions with urban areas to try and get them to see the benefit of non-profit programs.¹²⁸

¹²³ Kris Dudley, Telephone Interview, April 28, 2014.

¹²⁴ John Edmondson and David Spacek, Telephone Interview, April 9, 2014.

¹²⁵ Joe Nix, Telephone Interview, April 4, 2014.

¹²⁶ Kim Johnson, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

¹²⁷ John Edmondson and David Spacek, Telephone Interview, April 9, 2014.

¹²⁸ Kris Dudley, Telephone Interview, April 28, 2014.

REGULATIONS

As previously discussed, in Wisconsin, 5311/85.20 funds can't be distributed to non-public agencies due to state regulations. Program structure in Illinois also prohibits it from distributing funds to non-public agencies and in Texas these funds cannot be distributed to private for-profit transit operators.¹²⁹ Michigan doesn't have anything in its state statutes that prevent funds from being distributed to non-profits or private agencies. Its policy is to only distribute 5311 funds to public agencies, but there is flexibility to change that policy.¹³⁰

POLICY GOALS

There are certain goals and objectives that WisDOT would hope to accomplish if more funding became available or changes to programs were made.

GOALS

Efficiency

Efficiency looks at how resources, including funding and services, are used for employment transportation. Utilizing the resources to the greatest extent possible to meet the needs of employment transportation is what WisDOT is hoping to accomplish. The resources should be used to produce effective employment transportation without wasting resources, time or energy.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness takes into account how successful services are in providing employment transportation. The goal of effectiveness is to maximize employment transportation options and funding in Wisconsin.

Equity

Equity does not mean that all areas need to be treated equally but that all areas are treated fairly or impartially. The goal for employment transportation is to have a fair distribution of resources across the state.

Feasibility

Feasibility is the understanding of whether or not certain employment transportation options can be implemented in Wisconsin. It is important to understand the resources available and the regulations to find the best options that can be implemented.

¹²⁹ Kris Dudley, Telephone Interview, April 28, 2014.; John Edmondson and David Spacek, Telephone Interview, April 9, 2014.

¹³⁰ Kim Johnson, Telephone Interview, April 7, 2014.

OBJECTIVES

Efficiency

The objective of efficient employment transportation in Wisconsin takes into account funding sources and shared resources. Coordinating with other agencies and organizations, like WisDOT does with DWD, can be a way to maximize resources. Leveraging other funding sources, such as employers, offers more resources to providing services.

Effectiveness

In order to maximize employment transportation around the state it is important to consider service expansion, sustainability, and coverage. The maps below show the existing coverage of public transit systems and vehicle purchase/repair programs in Wisconsin.

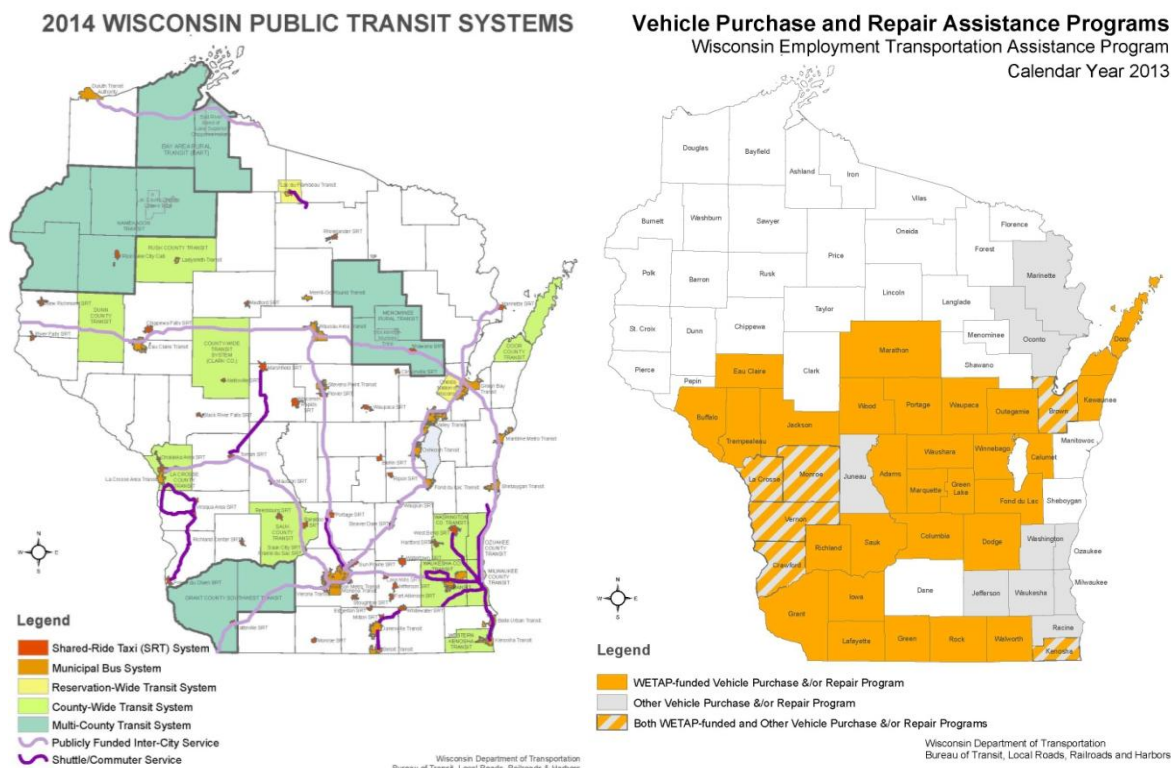


Fig. 2 Coverage of Public Transit Systems and Vehicle Purchase and Repair Programs in Wisconsin

While these services are effective at reaching some areas, there are many areas of the state where services could be expanded. Public transit services could be expanded to include more route options and longer hours to address some of the unmet needs. The number of loan programs could be expanded to reach more areas where public transit isn't an option. Expanding vanpool and rideshare programs, as well, would maximize the options that workers have for transportation. Expanding services is important, but making sure that they are also sustainable is just as important. In order for a service to be effective, it must also be able to be maintained without a great expense of resources.

Equity

The coverage of services is also an equity objective. Rural areas currently have less coverage, and services should be promoted more in these areas. There are also gaps and deficiencies in services that are unfair to some users. Providing services that meet the needs of more users, such as shift workers and rural areas, would be more equitable.

Feasibility

For feasible employment transportation options in Wisconsin, it is necessary to consider what statutes and rules allow. For options that are allowed, it is the objective to have the capacity to implement them. Capacity can be local and state resources including personnel and equipment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations were derived from analyzing existing services and the policy goals. Information from other state DOTs and other relevant research was also a part of the process. Ideas were identified for the state and local levels to better meet the goals of employment transportation in Wisconsin.

STATE LEVEL

State level recommendations focus on how WisDOT can provide assistance and improve existing programs for employment transportation.

Assistance

In Illinois participants of the JARC program will be given technical assistance, which is something that WisDOT could provide as well.¹³¹ Since 5307 and 5311/85.20 funds can't be provided to non-public agencies in Wisconsin, this is a feasible way to assist JARC recipients with the loss of funding. Technical assistance can include, but is not limited to, assisting in finding additional funding options, rural transportation services and regional connections, which are the biggest unmet needs. As noted previously, many services don't actively advertise, which is part of the reason that people are unaware of the options available to them. WisDOT could assist in marketing campaigns by providing template materials and ideas to expand services. The objective of expanding coverage of services can be addressed through more structured mobility management to make sure that the whole state is getting served. WisDOT could also provide planning funds for the local level when deciding how they are going to meet employment transportation needs.

Programs

The statewide Ridesharing Program could be expanded to be similar to Club Ride Commuter Services in Southern Nevada. Club Ride is a public-private partnership created by the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada (RTC). RTC partners with employers to provide this free incentive-based program. The program is beneficial to employers because employees

¹³¹ John Edmondson and David Spacek, Telephone Interview, April 9, 2014.

are at work on time and absent less often. There are also tax advantages, and it can be used toward Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) certification. RTC manages the program including providing carpool and vanpool matching, marketing materials and Guaranteed Ride Home service. It also hosts educational transportation fairs.¹³² A program such as this can expand ridesharing and vanpooling, promote coordination with employers and, hopefully, fill in deficiencies in service.

LOCAL LEVEL

Recommendations for the local level focus on better coordination with employers and regional transportation options.

Employer Coordination

Increasing partnerships with employers can provide another source of funding and encourage service expansion. Making employers aware of the issues and benefits of employment transportation will, hopefully, lead to increased services. As mentioned in Texas, two large employers will be taking over funding of employee transportation services once JARC funds are gone since the services have proven to be a success.¹³³ Outreach to employers from local transit agencies and service providers could come from marketing materials provided by the state.

Regional Transportation

To address regional transportation needs, groups can be formed such as the Northeastern Wisconsin Regional Access to Transportation Committee (NEW RAT). The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission and East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission facilitate meetings that include transit operators, human service staff, mobility managers, Metropolitan Planning Organization and Regional Planning Commission transportation planners and other stakeholders.¹³⁴ In addition to regional transportation committees, intergovernmental agreements between municipalities could be signed to coordinate funding for regional coverage and take into account rural transportation needs. Since Wisconsin statutes prevent Regional Transportation Authorities from being formed, these are feasible alternatives.

STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS

Both the state and local levels can promote programs that encourage employment transportation. They can also work together to better coordinate funding and services. For example, funding for vehicle purchase programs may not be needed as much if public transit programs were expanded to meet the needs of rural areas and shift workers.

Education about employment transportation is critical to gaining understanding of the issues and presenting feasible solutions. Mobility managers and social service agencies could be provided

¹³² Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, "Employer Services", *Club Ride*, 2014, http://www.rtcnv.com/club_ride/employer-services/.

¹³³ Kris Dudley, Telephone Interview, April 28, 2014.

¹³⁴ Jeff Agee-Aguayo, Email message, March 12, 2014.

with more training that is specific to employment transportation. Also, both the state and local levels could work more with employers on the tax incentive programs.

CONCLUSION

This report presents an overview of employment transportation in Wisconsin in response to changes to the JARC program with the expiration of SAFETEA-LU and signing of MAP-21. The surveys and research conducted provided WisDOT with insight into services, funding sources, unmet needs and barriers. Wisconsin employment transportation service examples of ridesharing, public transit, taxis and vehicle purchase/repair programs give an idea of what type of programs exist in Wisconsin and the needs they can meet if people are aware of the service. It is clear that there are many needs that are not being met, the biggest being shift workers and regional connections. There are also barriers, such as funding, that will need to be addressed in order to meet those needs. Other state Departments of Transportation surveys and research provided an idea of additional employment transportation approaches as well as an understanding of how they are dealing with changes to the JARC program. This information, along with clearly defined policy goals, helped in deriving recommendations for state and local levels. Should funding or program changes occur, recommendations such as state technical assistance, regional connections and employer coordination could lead to improved employment transportation services in Wisconsin.

APPENDIX 1: Wisconsin Agencies and Organizations

Name	Title	Wisconsin Agency/Organization
Ann Schell	Transportation Planner	West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Ashley Nedeau-Owen	Mobility Manager and Director Transportation Development	Southwest Community Action Program (SWCAP)- LIFT
Carolyn Feldt	Elder and Disability Service Manager	Western Kenosha County Transit
Carrie Porter/Darice Hannon	OAA Consultant – Transportation Specialist/ WISE Program Coordinator	Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
David Vickman	Transit Coordinator	GO Transit
Deborah Wetter/Nicole Voelzke	General Manager/Community Relations Specialist	Valley Transit
Gary Eckstein	Vocational Outreach Manager	Kenosha Achievement Center
Greg Seubert	Transit Director	Wausau Metro Ride
Jeff Agee-Aguayo	Transportation Planner	Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission
Jeff Segebrecht	Program Director	Work ‘n Wheels, SWCAP
Justin Svingen	Mobility Manager	Rock County
Lynn Gilles	Transit Manager	Fond du Lac Transit
Mai Yia Yang	Mobility Manager	Forward Service Corporation
Mary Ebeling	Transportation Policy Analyst	State Smart Transportation Initiative
Matt Mueller	VP, Funding Support Services	Ways to Work
Nick Musson	Associate Transportation Planner	East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Pam Busch	Mobility Manager	Door-Tran
Peter Fletcher	Transportation Planner	Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission
Renee Callaway	Transportation Planner/Rideshare Etc. Coordinator	Madison Area Transportation Planning Board
Sue Pomplun	Work-n-Wheels Coordinator	ADVOCAP
Terry Nolan	Associate Planner	Janesville MPO

APPENDIX 2: State Departments of Transportation Staff

Name	Title	State Department of Transportation
David Spacek/John Edmondson	Deputy Director of Transit /Section Chief, Service Coordination and Compliance	Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) - Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation
Joe Nix	Senior Transportation Planner	Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT) – Bureau of Transportation Planning and Modal Programs
Kim Johnson	Transportation Services Section Manager	Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) – Office of Passenger Transportation
Kris Dudley	Program Manager	Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) – Public Transportation Division

APPENDIX 3: Wisconsin Survey

Questions for Wisconsin Agencies / Organizations

Services

1. What type of employment transportation services are provided for both urban and rural areas? How did the services start?
2. How are people informed of the programs available to them?
3. How successful have the programs been? Have there been programs that have been especially successful or innovative?
4. What needs aren't being met?

Funding

1. How are the services funded?
 - a. Federal
 - b. State
 - c. Local
 - d. Private (employers/businesses)
 - e. Other
2. Are any of the services funded by JARC funds? If yes, how much of the funding is provided by JARC funds?

Barriers

1. What barriers exist to a more successful program in the following categories?
 - a. Funding
 - b. Demographic
 - c. Geographic
 - d. Political

General

1. Do you have any suggestions for other individuals or groups we should contact?

APPENDIX 4: State Departments of Transportation Survey

Questions for other state Departments of Transportation

Services

1. What type of employment transportation services exist in your state for both urban and rural areas?
 - a. How did those services start?
2. What legislation do you have that enables these services?
 - a. Can 5311 funds be distributed to non-public agencies?
3. How are people informed of the employment transportation services available to them?
4. Have there been programs that have been especially successful or innovative?
5. What needs aren't being met?

Funding

1. What sources of funding are available for employment transportation?
2. If using JARC funding, how are the programs adapting to the funding changes brought about by MAP-21?
3. For urban areas are programs being transferred to 5307? If so, how are you able to establish that?

Barriers

1. What barriers exist to a more successful program in the following categories:
 - a. Funding
 - b. Demographic
 - c. Geographic
 - d. Political