METRO RIDE
TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for
County of Marathon
Metro Ride

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Metro Ride Transit Development Plan

Introduction

The 2012 Transit Development Plan (TDP) completed for the Metro Ride System in Wausau WI builds upon the two previous TDPs completed in 1999 and 2006. The purpose of the TDP process is to evaluate transit service in the context of a changing environment. The evaluation of the existing transit service and how it is performing within the residential, employment, and fiscal landscape lead to the development of a plan to improve the service to meet the changing mobility needs identified through the study process. The 2006 TDP recognized that the growing metropolitan area needed a regional transit network. To that end, the Wausau Area Transit Service (WATS) changed its name to Metro Ride, and service was provided beyond the City of Wausau limits to Schofield, Rothschild and Weston. Since 2006, the fiscal situation in Marathon County has deteriorated, as it has for much of the country. This plan looks at the Metro Ride system and the current needs of the population with an understanding of the realities facing local governments at this point in time and into the near future.

Population and Employment in the Wausau Metropolitan Area

The Wausau Metropolitan Area is located in Marathon County, which is located in central Wisconsin. In terms of land area, Marathon County is the largest county in the state. Wausau is located approximately 175 miles east of Minneapolis and 140 miles north of Madison. The Wausau Metropolitan Area includes the urbanized areas of Marathon County. Appendix A provides a demographic and socioeconomic profile of the Wausau metropolitan area as well as employment and commuting patterns in the region.

According to Census 2010 tabulations, the City of Wausau is home to 39,106 people, up 1.8 percent since the 2000 Census. From 2000 to 2010, the areas with the greatest population growth occurred in some of the suburban areas outside the City of Wausau including Kronenwetter, Weston, and Stettin. From 2010 to 2030, the area is projected to grow by a very modest 7 percent. The minor civil division that is expected to have the highest growth rate is the Village of Rothschild, which is projected to grow by 63.8 percent. Other high growth is projected in the Towns of Mosinee and Rib Mountain and the City of Mosinee.

Most jobs are located in Wausau, but there are also a substantial number of jobs spread throughout the urbanized area. The larger employers are typically located in downtown Wausau or along corridors leading into and out of town.

Wausau residents primarily work in Wausau, but a sizeable number also commute to the Village of Weston. The reverse is also true for Wausau employees.

Metro Ride Service

At this time of this study, Metro Ride operated bus and paratransit service in the Wausau Metropolitan area, providing service throughout the City of Wausau, as well as to parts of the Villages of Rothschild and Weston and the City of Schofield. Metro Ride provided 19 fixed routes, including 9 regular routes, and 10 express routes. Metro Ride Paratransit Service provided "curb to curb" service to ADA-eligible passengers who are unable to use the fixed route bus system due to physical or mental disabilities. The Metro Ride paratransit service was contracted out to a local provider and the service area included all locations within ¾ of a mile of a Metro Ride fixed route. Appendix B provides a description of the 2011 Metro Ride system.

However, during the course of the study, funding was removed for service beyond the City of Wausau limits and service to Rothschild, Weston and Schofield ceased at the end of 2011. In 2012, Metro Ride provides fixed route bus service on 7 regular routes and 9 express routes within the City of Wausau. Also, the paratransit service is now operated by Metro Ride.

Peer Community Analysis

In order to have something against which to gauge how Metro Ride is performing, a peer community analysis was conducted as part of this study using information from the 2010 National Transit Database. Both national and Wisconsin peers with similar operating environments to the Wausau metropolitan area were chosen for the analysis. Information on the transit service operated by these peer systems and Metro Ride was collected, analyzed, and compared. A trend analysis was also completed for the same peer group and Metro Ride over the previous 5-year period. The details of the peer community analysis can be found in Appendix C.

In 2010, Metro Ride provided more service per capita than almost all of its peers in both groups, and the service was generally effective, although more so against its Wisconsin peers than the national peer group. On service effectiveness measures, Metro Ride was average among its peers, with its 20.5 passengers carried per hour or 1.5 passengers carried per mile, but lagged with respect to passengers per peak vehicle.

The cost of operating service (financial efficiency) was roughly average based on vehicle hours and miles of service provided, and exceptional on a peak vehicle basis due to the size of the peak express bus network.

A significant concern was the span of service, which was lower than almost all of its peers both on weekdays and Saturdays, with no summer Saturday service. Only one system from either peer group operated Sunday service, so having no service on Sundays was not unusual among Metro Ride and its peers.

The past five years have clearly been difficult ones for the transit industry in general, but Metro Ride performed fairly well over the period. The amount of service provided remained about the same at Metro Ride and both peer groups during the period. Metro Ride ridership increased by 9.5 percent, which was much higher than the 1.8 percent increase realized by Wisconsin peers, but much lower than the 20.3 percent increase in ridership by the national peer group. Farebox revenue increased significantly across the board, but at a slower rate for Metro Ride. For Metro Ride, service effectiveness, cost effectiveness, and amount and use of service all improved over the period, with the exception of revenue miles per capita, which decreased by 2.9 percent. However, Metro Ride was less financially efficient over the period, but reduced financial efficiency at a rate the same or better than the peer averages. The most remarkable observation during the period was the fact that Metro Ride increased fares, but continued to keep ridership stable and even increase it some. This fact shows how important Metro Ride service is in the community for providing mobility options for different types of people and trip purposes.

Public Outreach

An extensive public outreach program was employed during the creation of this plan. Riders were counted and surveyed, local and regional stakeholders were interviewed and participated in workshops, riders were engaged at the Transit Center, and Metro Ride staff was interviewed. Details regarding the public outreach effort and the resulting information learned are provided in Appendix D. Frequent comments and topics of discussion included the potential for service to Rib Mountain and the discontinuation of the service to Weston.

Rider Survey

A survey of Metro Ride fixed route riders was undertaken on April 15, 2011. The first component of the survey was a count of passengers boarding and alighting at each of the fixed route stops. The second component of this effort was the survey questionnaire that gave riders an opportunity to provide input on Metro Ride services and ideas for service change proposals.

During the one-day weekday opinion survey period, about 1,350 forms were issued and 454 valid surveys were returned, processed and summarized. This is a response rate of about 33.6 percent, which is high for this type of survey. Typically, response rates between 20 and 25 percent are attained.

Key findings from the rider survey include the fact that the Metro Ride ridership base is increasingly dependent upon the Metro Ride service as compared to the previous survey in 2005 and is comprised of a significantly lower income level when compared to the population of the City of Wausau overall. More than half (56.5 percent) of Metro Ride riders said they could not complete their trips without bus service, 75.4 percent of riders said they did not possess a driver's license, and 85.7 percent said that no vehicle was available for their trip. To top it all off, 77.7 percent of riders live in households with one or fewer vehicles. Increases in

the transit dependency variables ranged from 5 to 10 percent from 2005 to 2011. Additionally, a staggering 57 percent of Metro Ride riders reported annual family income of *less than $10,000*, a number that is even lower than the poverty threshold for individuals, let alone families. On the other end of the spectrum, 60.1 percent of Wausau residents have family incomes of $45,000 annually, while the percentage of Metro Ride riders with incomes over that level is only 5 percent. From 2005 to 2011, 18.2 percent more Metro Ride riders reported family incomes of less than $20,000 annually.

With regard to rider attributes, most walk to get to their bus (73.7 percent) and transfer to another bus to complete their trip to their final destination (67.1 percent). Walks to the bus or to the final destination are generally short (the vast majority of riders have to walk less than 2 blocks). Work and school are the most common trip purposes for Metro Ride weekday riders, but the percentage of the trips with the highest increase from the previous survey were shopping trips. Most (68.8 percent) Metro Ride riders have been riding for at least 3 years. The majority of riders use the service 3 to 5 days per week (58.6 percent), but another 30.6 percent of riders use the service 6 days per week. Also, nearly half (48.2 percent) of the ridership stated that they were riding more than the previous year with the other nearly half (46.7 percent) stating that they were riding at about the same frequency as the previous year.

With the fare increase in 2008, Metro Ride did not lose ridership, but many adults switched from paying cash to using a monthly pass, the largest single fare payment option cited in the survey results (29.2 percent of responses). Also, the ridership base is coming from increasing distances compared to the previous survey. Ridership from the City of Wausau decreased from 2005 to 2011, while the largest increases came from the communities of Weston and Schofield.

The results of the survey also indicate an overall level of very favorable satisfaction among riders with various attributes of Metro Ride and an improvement in the overall opinion of Metro Ride riders on the service since 2005. Only one of the four service attribute categories rated by weekday riders attained a score slightly below the threshold of a favorable response which is a combined total of *excellent, very good* and *good* ratings equal to or greater than 90 percent of all responses – *places served* (89.3 percent). *Interior cleanliness*, *on-time performance*, *service frequency* and *places served* all received ratings of *poor* by 2 percent or less of the survey respondents. All categories improved the favorability of their ratings by at least 2 percent since 2005, and *places served* improved by 6.1 percent.

When asked about the importance of various improvements that Metro Ride could make to service, restoring service to Weston, adding summer service on Saturdays, providing evening service, and starting Rib Mountain service all received about the same amount of support (over 20 percent apiece). So, adding/maintaining service to two destinations, Weston and Rib Mountain, and increasing the span of service are most important to the most Metro Ride riders. Increasing the frequency of service was most important to 12.5 percent of survey respondents.

Finally, survey respondents felt that raising fares rather than reducing service level would be preferable if Metro Ride needs to cut service (37.3 percent of respondents). Reducing frequency to 60 minutes was preferred by 20 percent of riders, and stopping evening and Saturday service was preferable to 16.8 and 16.3 percent of riders, respectively. With a strongly dependent and loyal ridership base, it is not surprising that retaining the base level of service is preferable to riders.

Stakeholder Meetings/Workshops

Themed workshops were conducted at the Marathon County offices with various community leaders, policy makers, and decision makers throughout the Greater Wausau area who have a "stake" in both the future of the community as well as in the mobility of Wausau area residents. Topics of discussion included employment and economic development, mobility needs of disadvantaged residents, and the specific needs of the healthcare and education communities.

Drop-in Sessions at the Transit Center

A "drop-in" session is a session where the public talks directly to the consultant team on a one-on-one basis and offers suggestions for improvements or comments on the system. Rider drop-in sessions were conducted on Tuesday, May 24th during the mid-day and evening peak periods at the Transit Center. Approximately 50 individuals provided their opinions. Riders were asked their general opinion of the service, what could be done to improve the service, and if there were any other specific locations they would like to be able to reach on the bus. It is interesting to note that 5 individuals (10 percent) who provided opinions were first-time riders the day of the drop-in sessions. Most other people who provided opinions were frequent, seasoned riders.

Riders in general were very complimentary of the service and the drivers. Only two negative comments were received during the drop-in sessions, and they were in specific regard to the impending elimination of Route K and a transfer missed by seconds at the Transit Center. Otherwise, everyone said they were happy with the service and that it gets them where they need to go, even though they would still like to get to other places not currently served by Metro routes. Some people even went out of their way to make sure compliments on the drivers' friendliness, helpfulness, and safety were heard. There were many positive comments on the cleanliness of buses and the reliability of the service. Many riders also commented on the convenience and value of the monthly pass.

Driver Forum

On Wednesday, May 25th, study staff was on-hand for driver comments at the bus garage before morning shift start and the first tripper shift. Drivers had specific comments on routing and service as well as general comments on requests they frequently receive from riders. As was discovered during the rider drop-in sessions, the most frequent requests made by riders to the drivers are for service to Rib Mountain/Wal-Mart/DMV. Riders also inquire about

continuing Weston service, operating Saturday service year-round and operating the service later in the evenings. Other requests include service to Stettin, East Bay, Fleet Farm, and the VA Hospital.

Metro Ride Service Evaluation

The 2011 Metro Ride system was evaluated for performance compared to a variety of standards related to service coverage, patron convenience, fiscal condition, and passenger comfort. Individual fixed routes were evaluated based on five factors: average daily ridership, daily revenue hours, daily revenue miles, daily operating cost, and daily farebox revenue. Appendix E describes in detail the evaluation of the Metro Ride system.

System Performance

Evaluating the Metro Ride system against a set of service standards or goals is the first step in the evaluation process. The process allows one to deal with a variety of issues related to the quality and quantity of bus service. This section presents proposed service standards and lists Metro Ride performance for each standard. This provides an initial guidance for the development of service strategies. It should be noted that viewing any system with regard to a set of standards or goals requires an understanding of local conditions as well as the trade-offs associated with providing service. In the Wausau Urbanized area, for example, Metro Ride cannot meet the coverage standards because several key communities do not participate in the system, which by Wisconsin state law prohibits Metro Ride from providing services to those communities. As another example, in some cases, it will be acceptable to be below the target; e.g., while it is desirable to provide 30 minute peak service on all routes, doing so on routes in less productive areas might mean not meeting the standards for fiscal condition. The analysis discusses these issues and the competing requirements of providing extensive coverage and frequent service while meeting the need to maintain cost effectiveness and stay within a limited budget. It will identify where standards should be met and where standards should be used as goals for Metro Ride to use in planning future service changes.

Route Diagnostics

After calculating the five performance factors for each individual Metro Ride route, each route was ranked based on performance. The rankings of each of the routes for three indicators can be used to calculate a cumulative rank score for each route on both weekday and Saturdays. The three indicators include passenger per hour to rate service effectiveness, and cost per passenger and farebox recovery to rate cost effectiveness. Route B was the best performing route on weekdays and Route A was the best performer on Saturdays.

An analysis of ridership by time of day is key to understanding some of the dimensions of the performance described above and was conducted as part of this study. Looking at the system as

a whole and each route by time of day, essentially by each trip, provides details that help to understand productivity levels, cost per trip data, and other quantifiable results. Furthermore, looking at each route on a per trip basis provides a profile to study ridership levels in relation to operating headways, and ultimately allows one to determine is current levels of service are appropriate to the results.

Ridership activity by stop was also analyzed as part of this study. This analysis quantifies how many people are using a given stop in the system on an average weekday or Saturday. Mapping ridership by stop allows stronger and weaker performing segments of routes to be identified.

System Issues and Opportunities

Three broad themes emerged from the evaluation of the Metro Ride service, including the public outreach efforts, which frame the issues, opportunities, and subsequently the development of alternatives and the five year plan. Note that these themes were identified prior to the official reduction of service and pertain to what is most appropriate for the Wausau metropolitan area based on all of the analyses conducted as part of this study, though some are not possible in the current fiscal environment. The following observations were made during the study process:

- The overall quality of the Metro Ride program is excellent, and where service is provided it is done professionally with a high regard for the customer.

- Metro Ride started new service to both Weston and Cedar Creek (Saturdays only) since the previous study. However, the Village of Weston had published that it had plans to stop funding the service (Route K) at the end of December 2011. The riders commented heavily that service to Weston is necessary. Based on the ridership profile of the existing Route K, it is clear that the route could be modified to be more streamlined and efficient and potentially produce higher ridership.

- There is large demand for service to Rib Mountain, where the greatest amount of new development in retail shopping is occurring. However, the Town of Rib Mountain has previously been unwilling to financially support a route in the town. However, riders were quick to comment that any service to Rib Mountain, even if limited, would be an improvement to the overall Metro Ride service.

- Service to Cedar Creek was established after the previous study, but only on Saturdays during the school year. Since the previous study, Globe University, whose representatives met with the study team during the outreach sessions, has been established and has demand for weekday service from downtown Wausau.

- Taking the previous two bullets together, and looking at the community profiles and rider/stakeholder input, the development of a truly regional Metro Ride program is

what is being called for in the Wausau metropolitan area. The following was stated during the 2005 study and remains appropriate in 2012:

> Metro Ride should be a regional system, serving the most densely populated parts of the region as it is today and will be over the next five years – Wausau, Weston, Schofield, Rothschild, and Rib Mountain – with the potential to expand to Stettin, Kronenwetter, and Mosinee when and if those locations reach appropriate densities for service.

- Additionally, ridership on Saturdays is very low, particularly on certain routes and service frequencies on both weekdays and Saturdays could potentially be modified on some routes and still maintain similar ridership. Potential route-level modifications are discussed in Appendix F.

The majority of the stakeholders and riders, speaking on behalf of the community, have positive feelings concerning the services that Metro Ride currently provides, the professionalism with which the services are delivered, and the need to maintain a bus system as a part of the urban infrastructure. This professionalism is reflected in Metro Ride staff's ability to maintain reasonable performance levels during the preceding five-year period even as public resources were reduced and fares raised, all while maintaining a very low administrative budget (13.6 percent of the budget for 2011), especially when compared to peer systems throughout the region (3.8 percent lower than the Wisconsin peers and 1.1 percent lower than the nationwide peers according to 2009 National Transit Database figures).

Given this context, the identification of issues related to service levels and individual routes in Appendix E had to be considered with a backdrop of two scenarios, one with and one without service to Weston, Cedar Creek, and Rib Mountain. Therefore, the first and most significant issue/opportunity, along with its corollary opportunities, was as follows:

- The City of Wausau needs to work with its neighbors to develop and implement new services to Rib Mountain Drive and maintain service to Weston, integrating these services into the current route network. Specific routes, schedules, and forecasted operating costs and subsidies need to be well-defined and developed in a partnership with these communities. It is important to note that it is the general feeling of the riders that any service to Rib Mountain, even if only operated a few times daily, would be acceptable. The inclusion of any or all of these locations will have an immediate and dramatic impact upon each of the issues identified in this current chapter relating to headways, load factors, productivity, and other service adjustments.

- In conjunction with the above, the system identity needs to be changed to reflect Metro Ride' identity as a regional transit system, and a marketing and program needs to be developed to reflect the image and services to the community.

- An expanded Metro Ride program should also consider the need for evening services to first and foremost provide employment opportunities, but also to provide evening access for shopping and other recreational uses.

- The entire Metro Ride network would be reexamined and revised in light of an expansion, but it is expected that expansion would only have positive impacts on ridership even on the least productive routes.

Expansion is clearly the key to a regionalized future for Metro Ride and the Wausau urbanized area. However, in the absence of expansion, there are some very basic issues which need to be addressed:

- The Metro Ride ridership base, which is currently heavily based upon school aged riders, who make up 23 percent of the regular route users and are nearly all of the express bus users, has to be expanded in order for Metro Ride to remain stable and/or grow even modestly in the next five years. Providing expanded service is clearly the best option, but others include revisiting services to the West Wausau area healthcare and services and other major generators in the existing service area. Diversity of ridership did improve from 2005 to 2011, with the percentage of school-age riders using regular routes decreasing and total ridership remaining steady.

- Metro Ride needs to improve its ridership productivity and trip loads, by either serving new markets or by trimming headways appropriately, be they peak, off-peak, or Saturdays. At present, there are many routes with all-day 30 minute headways that do not appear to require that much service.

- Similarly, the entire Saturday service needs to be reviewed and discussed, as ridership levels and productivity on most of the routes are not up to reasonable standards, service is provided every 30 minutes on most routes, and passenger loads are very low, particularly on Routes L, K, H and D.

- Flexible services -- route deviation, flex routes, demand response services -- may be an option for lower density neighborhoods and/or for areas where current fixed route ridership is very low. These type of services travel off route (or do not have a route) and are provided within a specified area to pick up or drop off passengers upon request. Ideally smaller vehicles would operate on route deviated services and the capital program of Metro Ride will be reviewed in conjunction with any such options.

- All other details discussed on a route by route basis concerning segment analyses, headways, directness, etc. need to be reviewed and discussed.

In conclusion, the Metro Ride system is stalled at the same crossroads as it was in 1999 and 2006, with two alternative futures. Without expansion into surrounding communities, it is likely

that the system will need to be trimmed to bring service levels in line with ridership, and that going forward ridership levels will likely remain generally flat. Under such a scenario, Metro Ride will not only not grow but will likely continue to slowly shrink, eventually providing services only to students and those who have no other means of transportation.

With an expansion program, Metro Ride has a dynamic future. Ridership levels would increase on all routes and in all locations served by Metro Ride, most current headways could be maintained, and evening service would become a real possibility in the later years of the program. With opportunities to reach all of the area's key commercial centers, hospitals, and schools, the ridership base would grow beyond its student and transit dependent base. Finally, with a new identity, Metro Ride would be perceived as a regional system and significant contributor to the economic growth of the community.

Service Plan

All of the previous analyses provided an overview of the environment in which Metro Ride operates, the service provided by Metro Ride, the public outreach process for this study, and an analysis and evaluation of the Metro Ride fixed routes. The Service Plan presents service options, projected costs, and an implementation strategy for the next five years.

The service plan, which forms the core of the program, describes route and service changes, including:

- Modifications to existing Metro Ride routes
- Schedule changes
- Headway adjustments
- Operating days
- Operating hours
- Fare policy

The detailed service options are presented in Appendix F. The service options were designed in such a way that the smallest number of current riders are impacted and the quality/desirability of the service remains intact. It also should be noted that whatever cost savings alternatives are implemented in the next year, the service is a valuable asset to the community and demand still exists in the region for service expansion. In the later years of the plan, service will be phased back in and it is recommended that expansions be made to increase the regional nature of the service and to reflect the development patterns that have occurred in recent years and are anticipated in the near future

Metro Ride is facing a 13% reduction in operating budget in 2012 from 2011. In 2012, Metro Ride will need to operate with a budget of $479,234 less than in 2011. Funding from Weston, Schofield, Rothschild, and Marathon County has also been removed for 2012. The Northcentral Area Congregations Organized to Make an Impact (NAOMI) raised approximately $18,000 to try

to save service to these three communities, but no feasible routing options existed within that limited budget.

Additionally, the fares were raised in for all fare media in 2012, as approved by the Transit Commission in late 2011. Also, Metro Ride is going to begin providing paratransit service directly as opposed to contracting out the service in 2012.

Selected Service Option for 2012

Given the potential service modifications and budgetary constraints, the Transit Commission decided a reduced service option would be implemented in 2012. Details of the selected option are provided in this section. Due to loss of municipal funding, transit service will no longer be provided in Weston, Rothschild or Schofield. Additionally, paratransit service will be operated by Metro Ride starting in 2012; it will no longer be contracted out. The cost and ridership impacts of the reduced system are described in Appendix F.

Service, both fixed route and paratransit, will only be provided within Wausau city limits in 2012. As noted, it is hoped that by the end of the following 5-year period, that service elements eliminated in 2012 be re-instated and that the region continues to work towards creating a network that serves the Wausau metropolitan area, not just the City itself.

Potential Funding Options

Given the shortage of funding at all levels of government at present, and the uncertainty of state and federal funding levels going forward, Metro Ride, like many other transit properties in the country, needs to investigate more reliable and sustaining funding resources. As it stands today, Metro Ride has had to make serious cuts in service to stay within its current means, which undermines its ability to meet the transportation needs of the community, particularly of those who depend upon Metro Ride as their sole source of transportation. Some potential sources of funding, some of which would likely require legislation at the state level, that might be pursued are described in Appendix F.

Appendix A Socioeconomics and Land Use Characteristics

Introduction

The Wausau Metropolitan Area is located in Marathon County, which is located in central Wisconsin. In terms of land area, Marathon County is the largest county in the state. Wausau is located approximately 175 miles east of Minneapolis and 140 miles north of Madison. The Wausau Metropolitan Area includes the urbanized areas of Marathon County. Metro Ride service is provided in the City of Wausau, as well as the Villages of Rothschild, Schofield and Weston, all within the urbanized area. This chapter provides an overview of socioeconomic and land-use characteristics, based upon data collected from the 2010 United States Census, the 2009 American Community Survey (US Census Bureau), the State Demographic Center, the Longitudinal Employment-Household Dynamics Program (US Census Bureau), and the County of Marathon.

Population and Socioeconomics

According to Census 2010 tabulations, the City of Wausau is home to 39,106 people, up 1.8 percent since the 2000 Census. Table A-1 presents the population history and projections for all the Minor Civil Divisions that make up the Wausau area. From 2000 to 2010, the areas with the greatest population growth occurred in some of the suburban areas outside the City of Wausau including Kronenwetter, Weston, and Stettin.

Table A-1: Population History and Projections by Minor Civil Division 2000-2030 (MCD)

Minor Civil Division	Census 2000 Population	Census 2010 Population	Number Difference	Percent Difference	2020 Population Projection	2030 Population Projection[1]	2010-2030 Percent Difference
Kronenwetter village	5,369	7,210	1,841	34.3%	7,265	8,020	11.2%
Mosinee city	4,063	3,988	-75	-1.8%	4,803	5,190	30.1%
Mosinee town	2,146	2,174	28	1.3%	2,773	3,094	42.3%
Rib Mountain town	7,556	6,825	-731	-9.7%	8,912	9,695	42.1%
Rothschild village	4,970	5,269	299	6.0%	7,278	8,633	63.8%
Schofield city	2,117	2,169	52	2.5%	2,419	2,497	15.1%
Stettin town	2,191	2,554	363	16.6%	1,910	1,611	-36.9%
Wausau city	38,426	39,106	680	1.8%	43,103	45,372	16.0%
Wausau town	2,214	2,229	15	0.7%	2,380	2,402	7.8%
Weston village	12,079	14,868	2,789	23.1%	14,911	15,935	7.2%
Weston town	514	639	125	24.3%	615	636	-0.5%

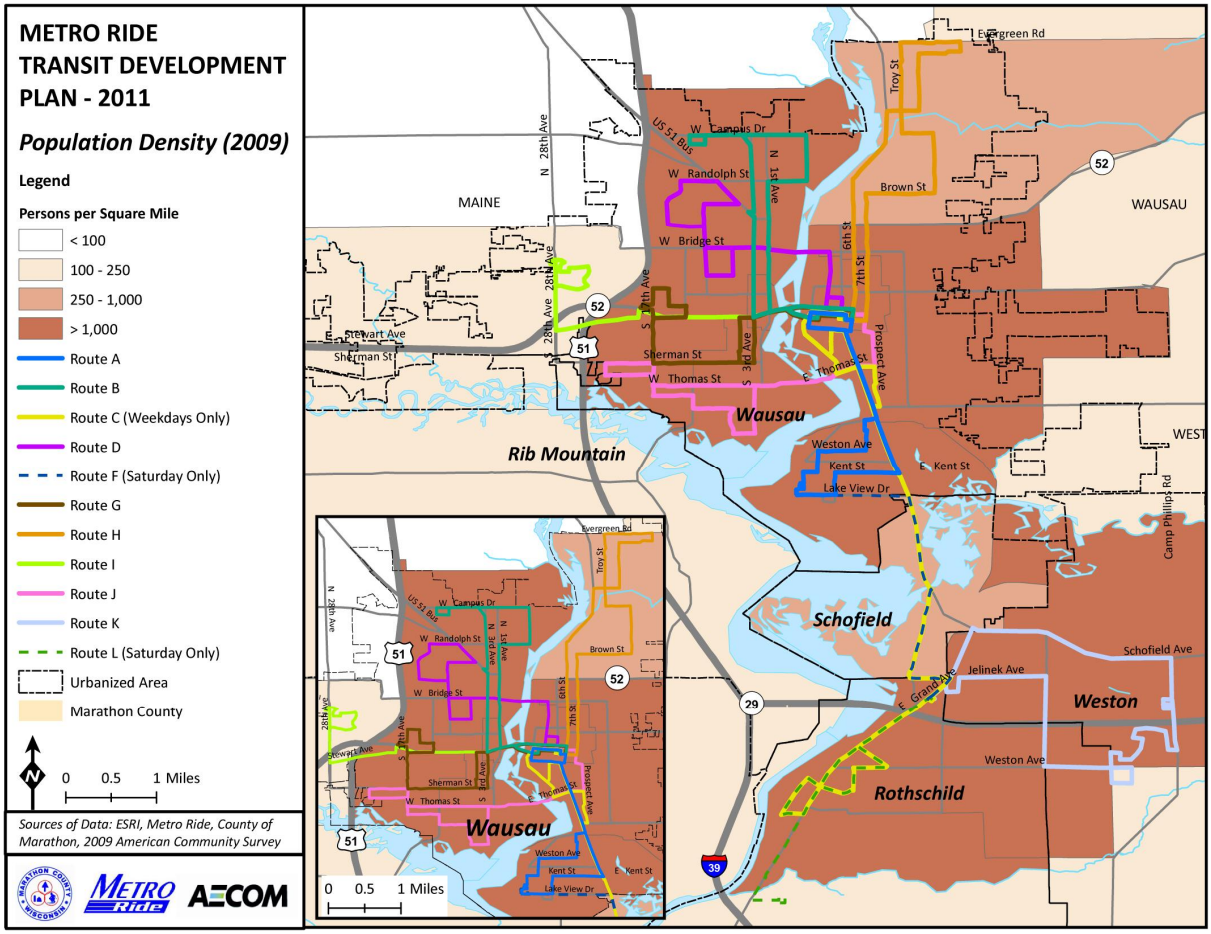
Source: Demographic Service Center, Division of Intergovernmental Relations, Wisconsin Department of Administration, June 2011

[1] Projections based on Census 2000 figures.

From 2000 to 2010, the Wausau region grew by 6.6 percent, which is slower than the previous 10-year period (9.0 percent), but continued faster growth since 1990. From 2000 to 2010, the City of Wausau grew by 1.8 percent, lower than the previous 10-year period (4.0 percent).

The City of Wausau has always been and will continue to be the biggest municipality in the region. Figure A-1 provides a graphic representation of population distribution throughout the area from the 2009 American Community Survey. Beyond Wausau, other dense population concentrations are found in the Weston and Rothschild.

Figure A-1: 2009 Wausau Area Population Density

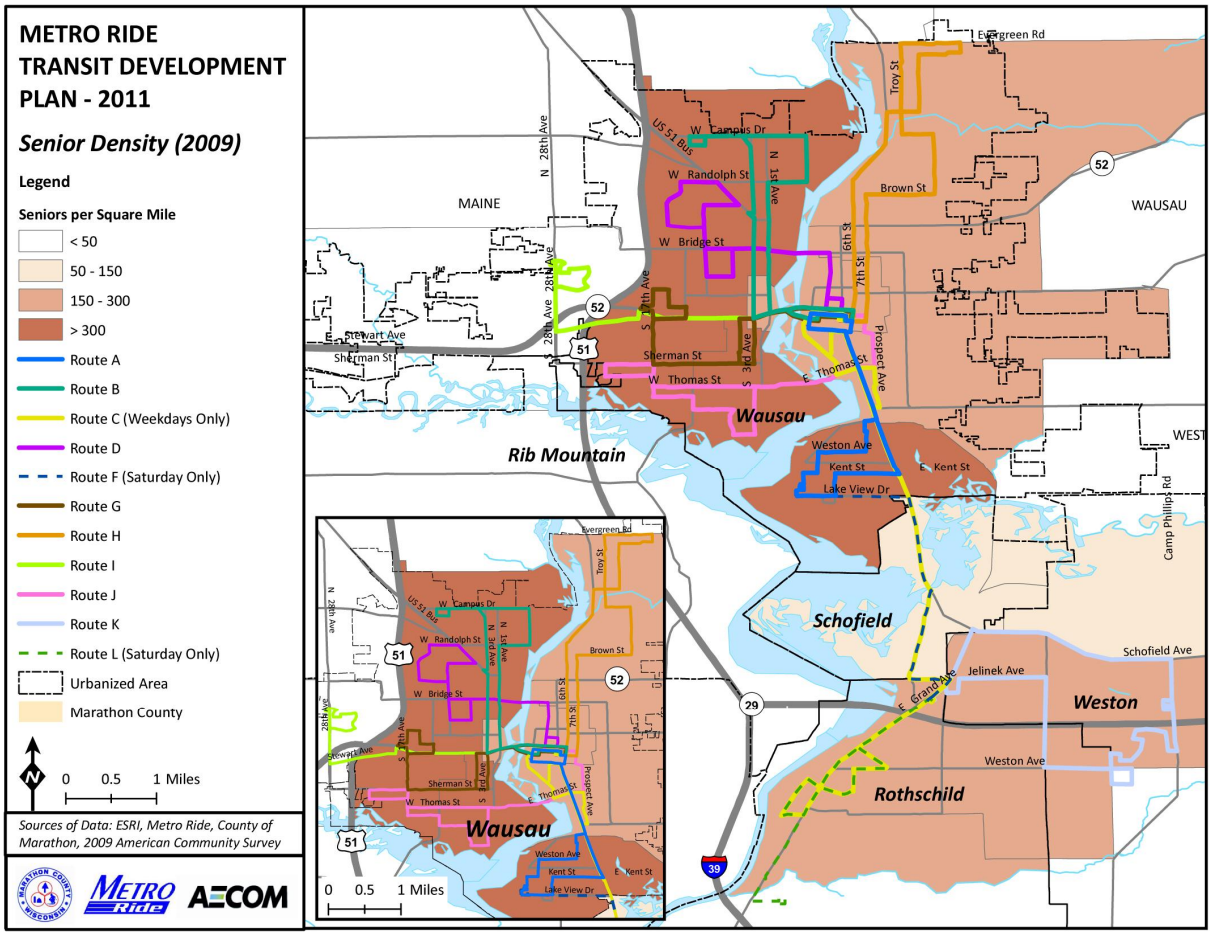


From 2010 to 2030, the area is projected to grow by a very modest 7 percent. The minor civil division that is expected to have the highest growth rate is the Village of Rothschild, which is projected to grow by 63.8 percent. Other high growth is projected in the Towns of Mosinee and Rib Mountain and the City of Mosinee. The Town of Stettin is projected to lose population.

Senior Citizen Population

Senior citizens tend to locate in the more urban areas, where access to health care, services and activities are readily available. This trend is confirmed by Figure A-2, which shows that there are larger concentrations of senior citizens located in Wausau and the urban areas versus the more rural areas (except for Schofield).

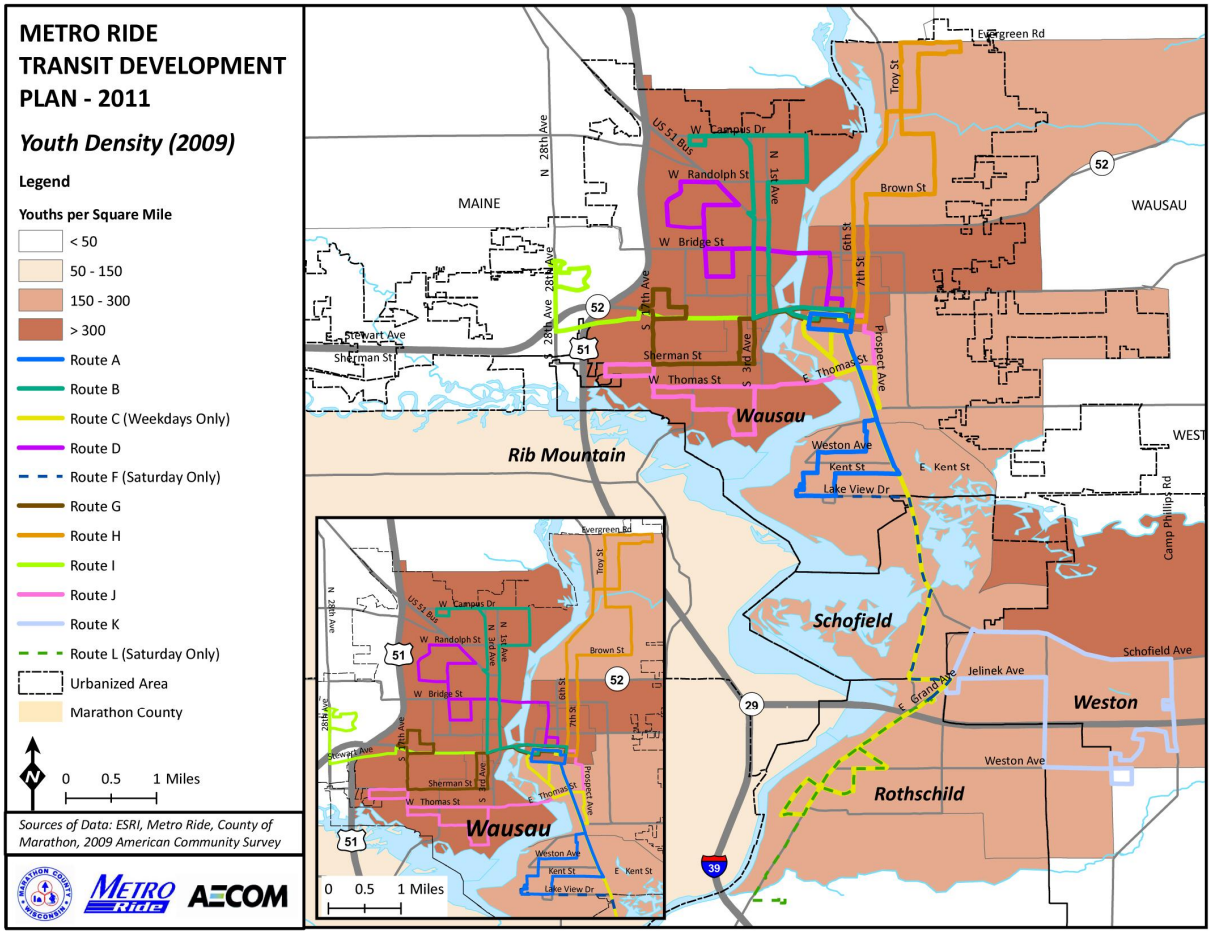
Figure A-2: 2009 Wausau Area Senior Citizen Density



Youth Population

Youth population is another market that is dependent on transit services. Metro Ride does add service for the youth population by providing weekday express tripper service (not shown on this map as these services are not included in this study). Figure A-3 shows the concentration of individuals under the age of 18 by census tract. This figure shows that there are high concentrations of youths located in the City of Wausau and the more urbanized areas of the region including Schofield, Rothschild and Weston.

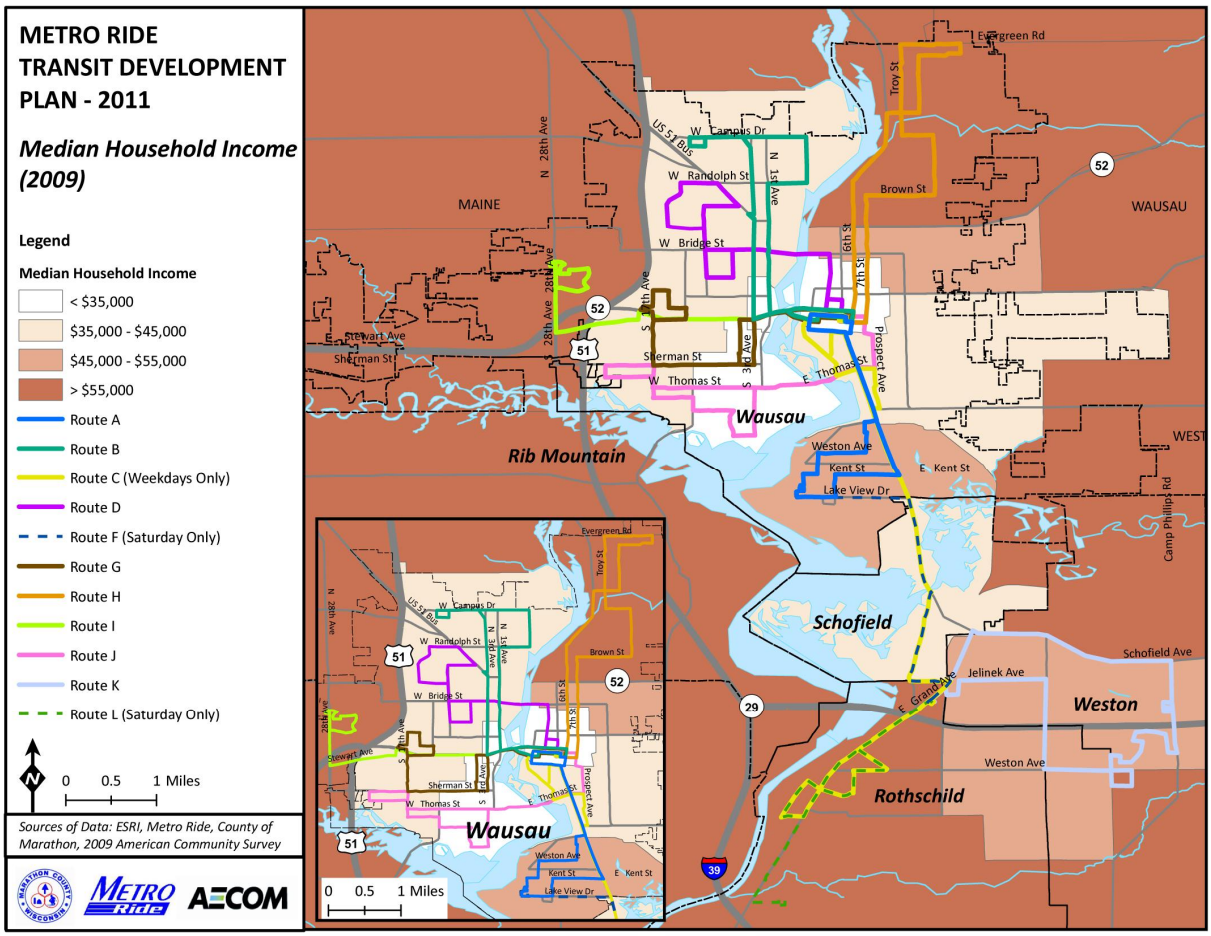
Figure A-3: 2009 Wausau Area Youth (under age 18) Density



Income

The median household income in Marathon County is higher than the median household income throughout Wisconsin ($49,994) and the rest of the United States ($50,221). For Marathon County, the median household income in the year 2009 was $50,495. However, the City of Wausau and the other urbanized areas in the region have substantially lower median household incomes. Figure A-4 provides an overview of median household income in the study area. The census tracts with the lowest household incomes are found in downtown Wausau. Other lower income areas are found throughout Wausau and in Schofield and Weston. All of the areas surrounding the urbanized region have median household incomes above the Marathon County average.

Figure A-4: 2009 Median Household Income

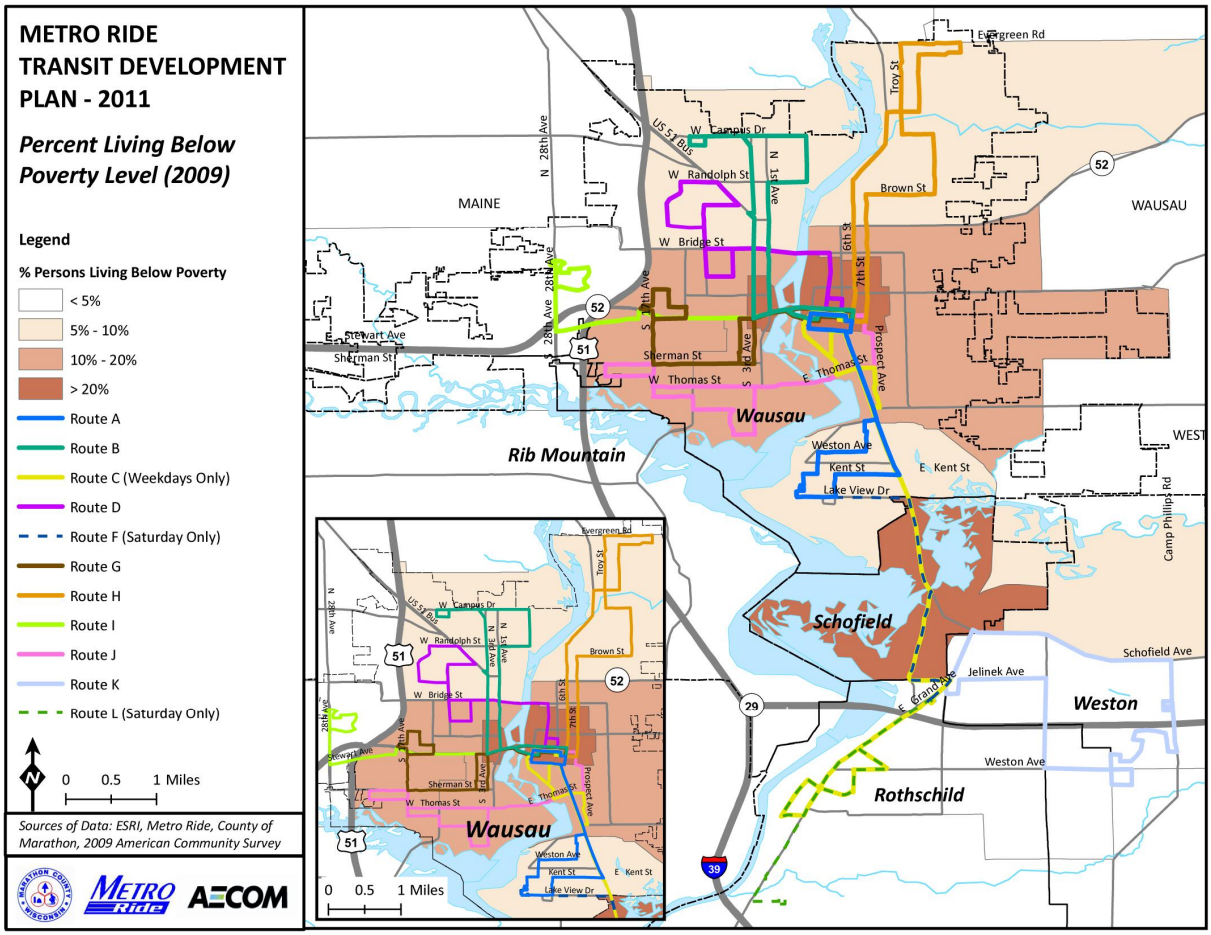


Households below Poverty Level

The poverty threshold is updated annually by the US Census Bureau mainly for statistical purposes to define the level below which incomes are considered too low to afford a socially acceptable amount of resources based on the number of people living in a household. The areas that have the highest number of people who are below the poverty level are areas located in the urban areas. In 2009, the poverty threshold for an average individual was $10,956. For an average two-person household the threshold was $13,991. For an average four-person household, the threshold was $21,756.

Figure A-5 shows the percentage of the population living below the poverty level by Census tract for 2009. The areas with the largest concentrations of people living below the poverty level are found in downtown Wausau and Schofield. Areas outside the urbanized areas in the region have very low percentages of population living below the poverty level.

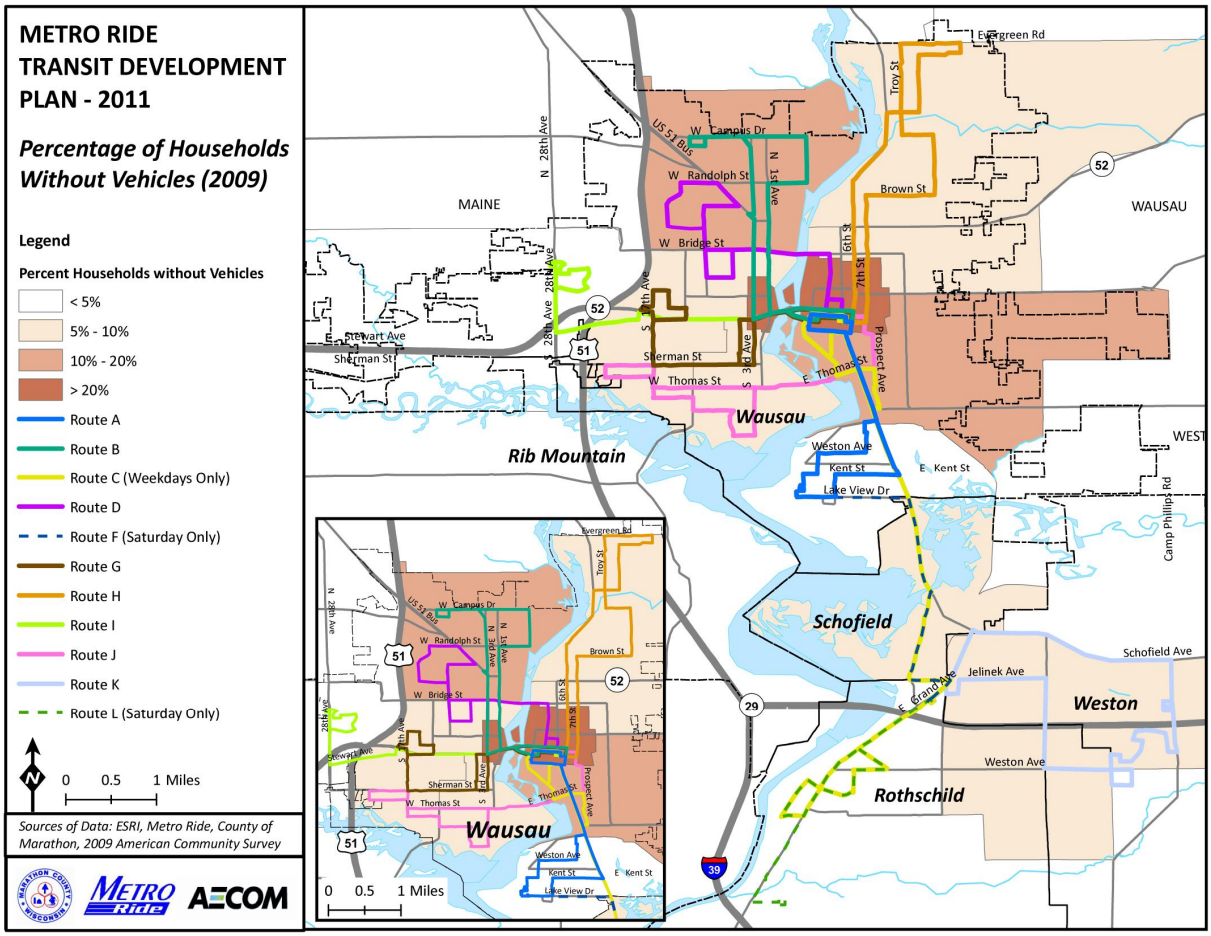
Figure A-5: 2009 Percentage of Population Living Below the Poverty Level



Zero-Car Households

Households without vehicles are generally dependent upon alternative forms of transportation including walking, bicycling, family or friends with vehicles, and public transportation. There are very few households without vehicles in Marathon County – it is a region heavily dependent upon the single occupancy vehicle. However, there are concentrations of households without vehicles in downtown Wausau and to a lesser extent in other parts of Wausau, Schofield, Weston, and Rothschild.

Figure A-6: 2009 Percentage of Households without Vehicles

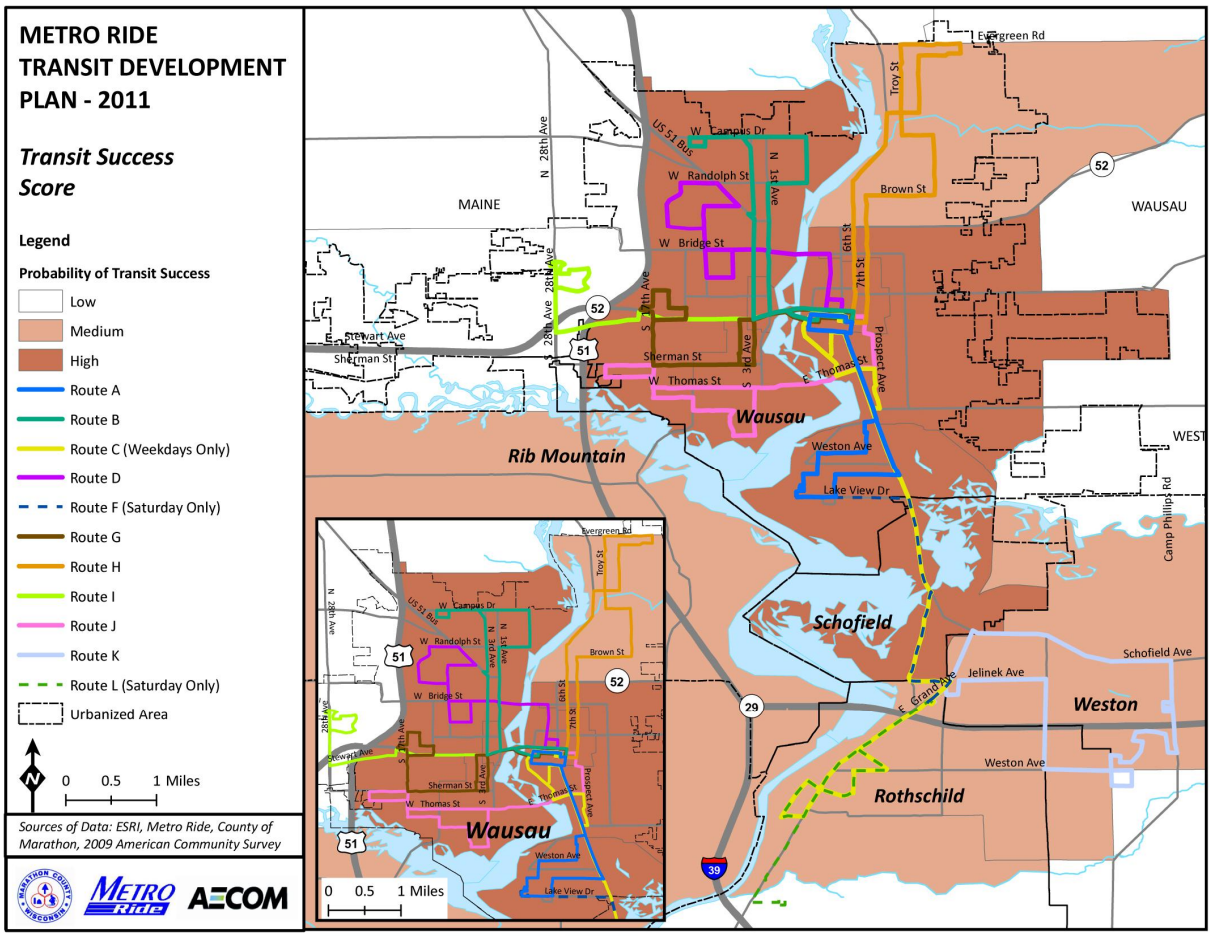


Transit Score

The transit score is an accumulation of all of the previous demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the study area population used to look at overall probability of transit success based on the characteristics of the resident population. Used in conjunction with major employers, trip generators and travel patterns in the area, an overall view of transit potential can be visualized.

Figure A-7 is a map of relative probability of transit success based on the demographic and socioeconomic profile of the resident population. The areas most conducive to transit are found throughout the City of Wausau and the City of Schofield. However, the urbanized areas of Weston, Rothschild, and Rib Mountain also have applicable socioeconomic conditions to warrant transit service.

Figure A-7: Probability of Transit Success



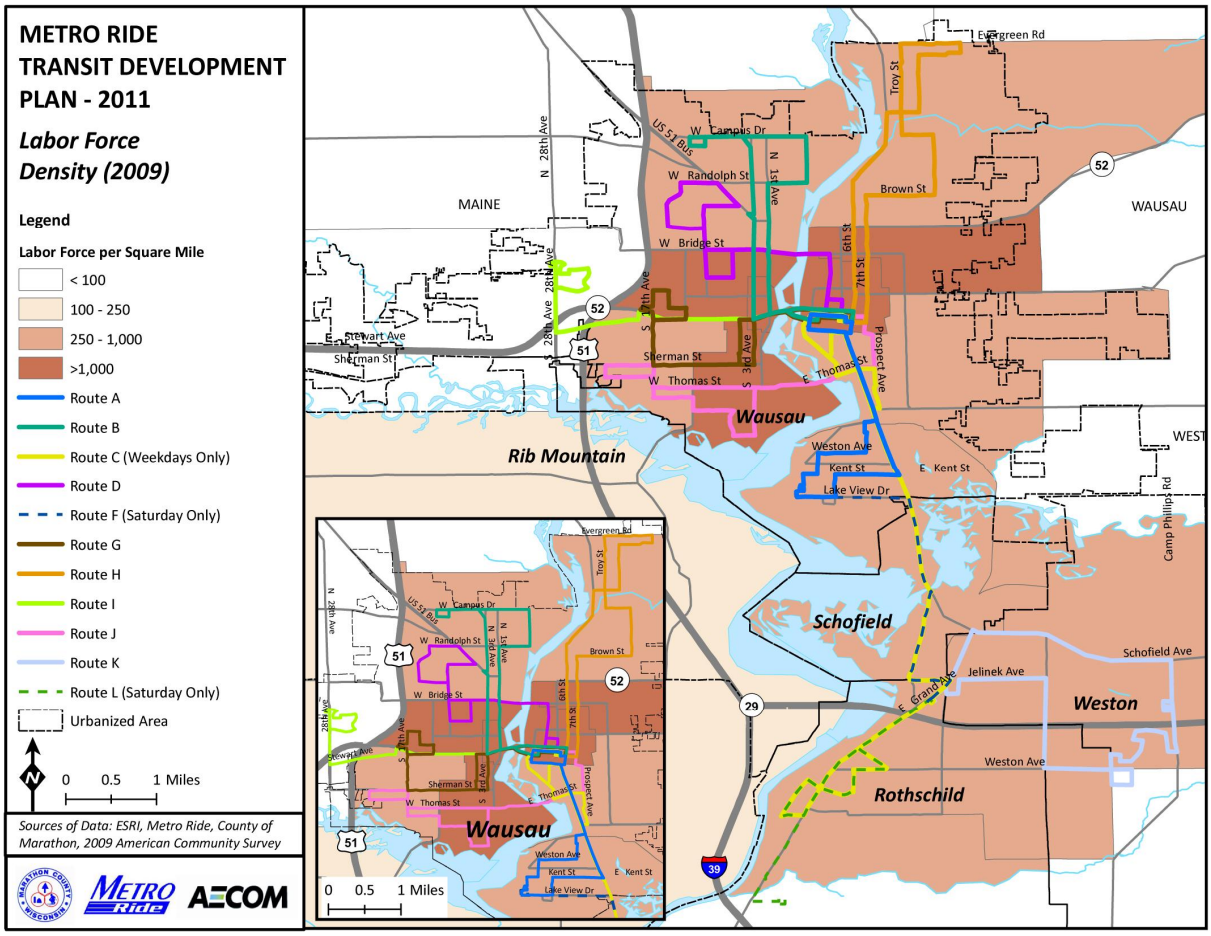
Employment and Commuting

The discussion on employment is separated into two topics – the workers in the region and jobs and employers in the region. Workers are discussed based on where they live and jobs and employers based on job site location and number of employees.

Labor Force

The labor force is comprised of workers who live in the Wausau area no matter where they work, either in the study area or beyond. The labor force is concentrated through central Wausau and Wausau as a whole. Other concentrations of workers are found throughout the urbanized area of the region in Schofield, Weston and Rothschild, and to a lesser extent, Rib Mountain. Figure A-8 is a map of 2009 worker density by Census tract.

Figure A-8: 2009 Wausau Area Labor Force Density



Employment

Information on number of jobs for each minor civil division within the Wausau area is presented in Table A-2. This table shows that most jobs are located in Wausau, but there are also a substantial number of jobs spread throughout the urbanized area. The information on jobs comes from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics dataset produced annually by the US Census Bureau.

Table A-2: Number of Jobs by Place

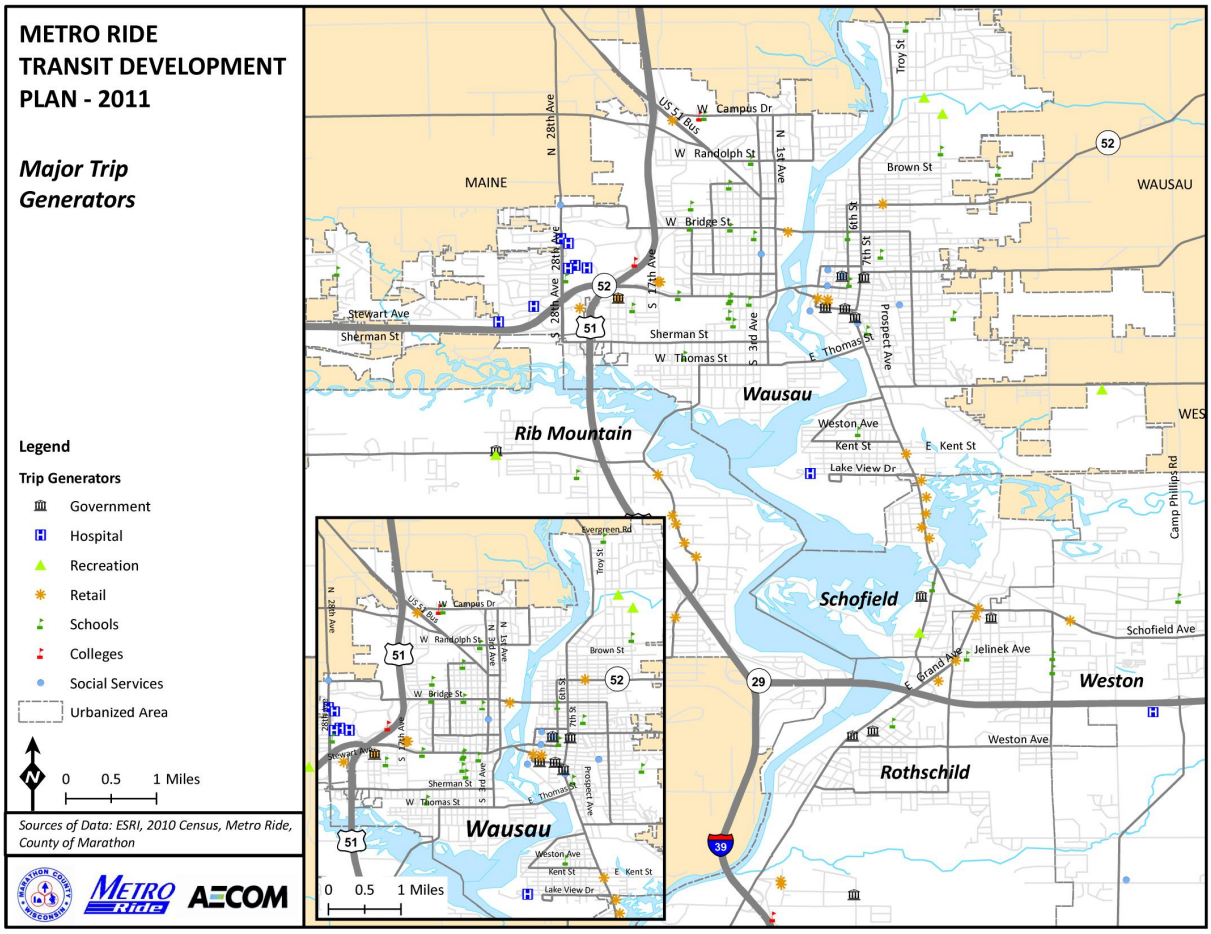
Place	Jobs (2009)
Wausau	30,550
Weston	8,886
Schofield	3,581
Rothschild	3,139
Rib Mountain	1,862

Major Generators

Major generators are single point locations that produce a lot of traffic, and can also produce a lot of transit riders. Such major generators include major employment locations and employers (containing at least 100 employees in one location), business districts, commercial areas, shopping centers, schools, hospitals, medical clinics, senior centers, government, and social service agencies. Figure A-9 presents the location of major generators in and around the City of Wausau. This map shows that major generators are clustered in downtown Wausau, and the along major corridors leading into and out of the city.

Please note that the information shown in the following tables and figures is dated from 2005 and only a few additions have been made based on observations of new development.

Figure A-9: Major Trip Generators



Government centers are the seats of government at a municipal, state, and federal level. Government centers are located near the center of each of the minor civil division that they serve. Federal and state governments have local outposts within Marathon County. Government Centers are presented below on Table A-3.

Table A-3: Government Centers

Government Center	City	Employees
County of Marathon	Wausau	825
US Postal Service – Wausau	Wausau	302
City of Wausau Police Department	Wausau	87
City of Mosinee	Mosinee	80
City of Wausau Department of Public Works/Engineering	Wausau	70
Village of Weston	Weston	62
City of Wausau Fire Department	Wausau	58
City of Wausau Administration	Wausau	57
Village of Rothschild	Rothschild	53
Town of Rib Mountain	Wausau	46
Marathon County Child Development	Wausau	40
City of Wausau – Wausau Area Transit	Wausau	39
City of Schofield	Schofield	25
City-County Data Center Commission	Wausau	23
City of Wausau Water Department	Wausau	22
US Postal Service – Schofield	Schofield	18
US Treasury Department – Internal Revenue Service	Rothschild	18
Village of Brokaw	Brokaw	15
City of Wausau – Wausau Community Development	Wausau	13
City of Wausau – Wausau Sewer Department	Wausau	12
Town of Knowlton	Mosinee	11
Wisconsin Supreme Court – Wausau	Wausau	9
City of Wausau Parks Department	Wausau	6
US Postal Service - Rothschild	Rothschild	5
Town of Stettin	Marathon	5
City of Wausau City Attorney	Wausau	4
Town of Maine	Wausau	3
Township of Marathon	Wausau	3
US Postal Service – Marathon	Marathon City	3
US Postal Service – Brokaw	Brokaw	2
US Department of Transportation – Federal Aviation Administration	Mosinee	2

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005)

Health services are very important generators as they have a lot of employees, as well as generate a lot of visitors. One major segment of the population that use hospitals a lot are the elderly. In Wausau, there is a concentration of hospitals located in the western part of the city near Highway 51 and Highway 29. Also, there are Saint Clare's Hospital and the Marshfield Clinic Weston Center located near Highway 29 in Weston. Table A-4 presents the hospitals in the Wausau area and the number of people they employ.

Table A-4: Hospitals

Hospital	City	Employees
Aspirus Wausau Hospital, Inc.	Madison	2,149
North Central Health Care Facilities	Wausau	859
Aspirus Clinics, Inc.	Wausau	512
Wausau Medical Center SC	Wausau	500
Radiology Associates of Wausau, Inc.	Wausau	170
Aspirus Specialists, Inc	Wausau	26
Saint Clare's Hospital, Ministry Health Care	Weston	Not Available
Marshfield Clinic Weston Center	Weston	Not Available

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005 with 1 2011 addition)

There is one major recreational generator in the Wausau area, the Granite Peak Ski area located in Rib Mountain. This ski area provides jobs for 161 people and is a major traffic generator along North Mountain Road in Rib Mountain. Table A-5 provides information about this recreational generator.

Table A-5: Recreation Generators

Recreation Site	City	Employees
Granite Peak Ski Area	Rib Mountain	161

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005)

Major retailers are major traffic generators due both to the commerce that occurs and the number of people that they employ. Many of the major retailers shown on Figure A-9 and on Table A-6 are located in newer strip developments outside of Wausau, along major highway corridors in locations such as Rib Mountain, Schofield, and Weston. The address listed for many of the major retailers is the corporate offices located outside of Marathon County.

Table A-6: Major Retailers

Retailer	City	Employees
Wal Mart	Rib Mountain	270
JC Penney Company – Wausau	Wausau	181
Cross Roads County Market	Wausau	177
ShopKo Wausau	Wausau	157
Pick-N-Save	Wausau	154
Menard Inc.	Wausau	146
Springs Window Fashions	Wausau	145
ShopKo Rothschild	Rothschild	145
Target Stores	Weston	140
Pick-N-Save	Schofield	140
Sam's Club	Rib Mountain	133
JC Penney Company	Wausau	131
Cedar Creek Foods LLP (Pick-N-Save)	Rothschild	121
Kohl's Department Store	Wausau	121
Best Buy	Rib Mountain	116
Sears Roebuck	Wausau	112
Quality Foods	Wausau	108
IGA – Rib Mountain	Wausau	102
IGA – Schofield	Schofield	101
K-Mart – Wausau	Wausau	66
Big Lots Stores	Weston	27
Wal Green Comp.	Wausau	26
Petco Supplies	Rib Mountain	25
Sears Roebuck	Wausau	11

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005)

Social service and charitable organizations are important members of the community that are mainly utilized by lower income people in Marathon County. Most of the social service organizations are located within the City of Wausau, some in downtown and others in the various neighborhoods. Table A-7 gives an overview of the social service and charitable organizations in Marathon County.

Table A-7: Social Services and Charitable Organizations

Social Service and Charitable Organizations	City	Employees
YMCA of Wausau	Wausau	170
North Central Community Action	Wisconsin Rapids	38
United Way of Marathon County	Wausau	12
Volunteer Center of Marathon County	Wausau	4
Special Olympics of Wisconsin, Inc.	Madison	3
Central Wisconsin Indian Centers, Inc.	Wausau	3
March of Dimes Birth Defects	White Plains	3
Wisconsin Lutheran Child and Family	Milwaukee	2
Aspirus YMCA	Weston	Not Available
Women's Community	Wausau	Not Available

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005 with 1 2011 addition)

Schools in the Wausau area are located primarily in residential areas in order to serve the local student population. In Marathon County there are a total of two urban school districts and seven rural school districts. Table A-8 presents information on the number of employees at area schools, ranging from elementary schools up to college level schools in Marathon County.

Table A-8: Schools

School	City	Employees
DC Everest Area School District	Schofield	672
North Central Vocational Technical	Wausau	587
Mosinee Public School	Mosinee	306
Wausau West High School	Wausau	207
Wausau East High School	Wausau	156
Horace Mann Middle School	Wausau	145
John Muir Middle School	Wausau	142
University of Wisconsin Colleges	Wausau	121
Wausau School District Substitutes	Wausau	113
Lincoln Elementary School	Wausau	62
Thomas Jefferson Elementary School	Wausau	61
Franklin Elementary School	Wausau	57
Wausau School District	Wausau	57
Riverview Elementary School	Wausau	53
GD Jones Elementary School	Wausau	53
John Marshall Elementary School	Wausau	53
Hawthorn Hills Elementary School	Wausau	50
Rib Mountain Elementary School	Wausau	46
Grant Elementary School	Wausau	42
Wausau School District	Wausau	33
Wausau School District Maintenance and Operations	Wausau	32
Maine Elementary School	Wausau	26
AC Kiefer Educational Center	Wausau	23
Stettin Elementary School	Wausau	21
Upper Iowa University	Wausau	18
Hewitt Texas Elementary School	Wausau	18
University of Wisconsin-Marathon County	Wausau	19
Little Scholars Preschool	Wausau	13
Montessori School of Wausau	Wausau	11
Saint Michael's School	Wausau	Not Available
Saint Anne's School	Wausau	Not Available
Trinity School	Wausau	Not Available
Newman Middle School	Wausau	Not Available
Newman High School	Wausau	Not Available
Globe University	Rothschild	Not Available
Rasmussen College	Wausau	Not Available

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005 with two 2011 additions)

Table A-9 and Figure A-10 present major employers in Marathon County (employers that employ at least 100 people). As most of the major employers are located in the Wausau area, no map of the county is provided. The larger employers are typically located in downtown

Wausau or corridors leading into and out of town. In many instances, the major generators listed in the previous section are also major employers in Wausau. Figure A-10 does show all of the major employers, however, Table A-9 does not repeat information listed in Tables A-3 through A-8.

Table A-9: Major Employers

Major Employer	City	Employees
Liberty Mutual Insurance Company	Wausau	1,451
Kolbe & Kolbe Millworks Company, Inc.	Wausau	1,442
Greenheck Fan Corp.	Schofield	1,245
Apogee Wausau Group, Inc.	Wausau	1,009
SNE Enterprises, Inc.	Mosinee	973
Wausau Benefits, Inc.	Wausau	967
Marathon Electric Manufacturing Corp.	Wausau	808
Marathon Cheese Corp.	Marathon	768
Wausau-Mosinee Paper Corp.	Mosinee	710
Weyerhauser Company	Rothschild	516
Mosinee Paper Corp – Pulp and Paper Division	Mosinee	483
Federal-Mogul Piston Rings, Inc.	Schofield	435
Land O'Lakes, Inc.	Wausau	406
Wausau Homes, Inc.	Wausau	372
SNE Enterprises, Inc.	Mosinee	334
Graphic Packaging Corp.	Wausau	308
Van Ert Electric Company, Inc.	Wausau	300
Fulton Performance Products, Inc.	Mosinee	273
Gordon Aluminum Industries, Inc.	Schofield	272
Kraft Foods North America, Inc.	Wausau	261
Wausau Coated Products, Inc.	Wausau	252
Wausau Tile, Inc.	Wausau	241
W-H Transportation Company, Inc.	Wausau	232
Oldcastle Glass, Inc.	Schofield	212
Mesaba Aviation, Inc.	Mosinee	208
Green Bay Packaging, Inc.	Wausau	201
Lemke Packaging, Inc.	Wausau	194
Moduline Windows, Inc.	Wausau	189
US Filter/Zimpro, Inc.	Rothschild	189
Gannett Satellite Information – Wausau Daily Herald	Wausau	182

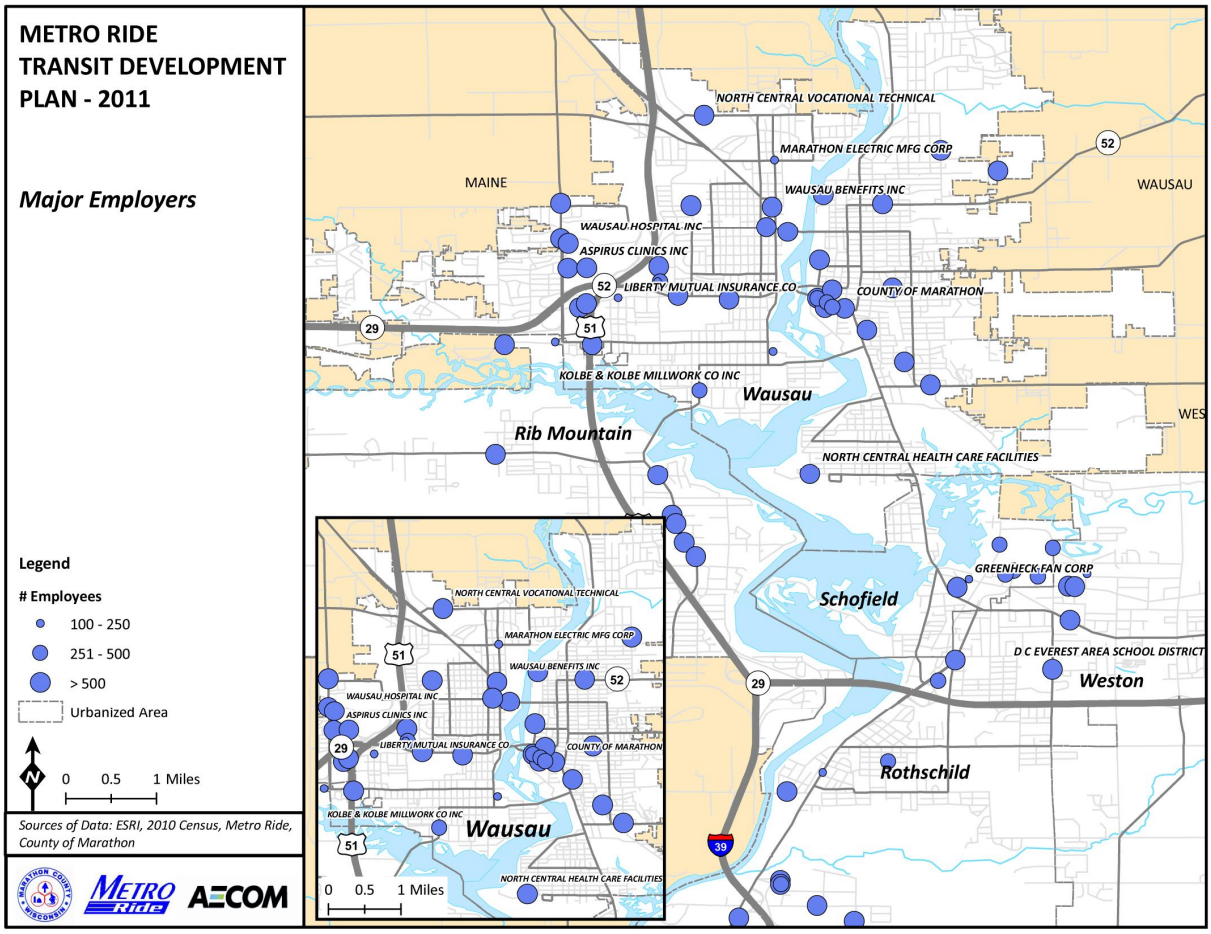
Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005)

Table A-9: Major Employers (cont.)

Major Employer	City	Employees
3M Company	Wausau	173
QTI Human Resources, Inc.	Wausau	170
United Parcel Services, Inc.	Wausau	155
Norlen, Inc.	Schofield	152
Parisian, Inc.	Wausau	149
Wausau Steel Corp.	Wausau	143
Rivers Hotels Company, Inc. – Holiday Inn	Rothschild	141
Graebel Companies, Inc.	Wausau	133
Hammer Blow, Inc.	Wausau	131
Wire Maid Manufacturing Limited	Schofield	127
Imperial Industries, Inc.	Wausau	125
Crystal Finishing Systems, Inc.	Schofield	123
Cedar Creek Foods LLP (Pick-N-Save)	Rothschild	121
17th Avenue Limited, Inc. – Ramada Inn	Wausau	120
Indiger Limited – 2510 Restaurant	Wausau	118
Merrill Iron & Steel, Inc.	Schofield	116
The Agency, Inc.	Wausau	111
Schofield Enterprises, Inc.	Schofield	110
Jarp Industries, Inc.	Wausau	107
Wausau Supply Company	Wausau	107
PDM Bridge LLC – Steel Bridges	Wausau	105
Krueger Wholesale Florists, Inc.	Mosinee	104
Marathon Communications Group, Inc.	Wausau	103
Hereford & Hops of Wausau LLC	Wausau	102

Source: Marathon County Planning Department (2005)

Figure A-10: Location of Employers with Greater than 100 Employees



Journey to Work

Commute patterns are displayed on Tables A-10 and A-11 for the City of Wausau, which is the largest minor civil division in Marathon County in terms of residents and number of jobs. Table A-10 presents the number of people who commute to the City of Wausau from the study area. Table A-11 presents the workplace destinations for Wausau residents. Both tables show that 8,394 people live and work in Wausau, and this is the single largest commuter pattern in the metro area.

Next to Wausau, the highest number of people commutes from the Village of Weston to Wausau for work. More than a thousand people also commute from Rib Mountain to Wausau for work.

Table A-10: Origin Location for Wausau Employees

Work in Wausau	
Live in	# Workers
Wausau	8,394
Weston	2,124
Rib Mountain	1,216
Kronenwetter	856
Rothschild	807
Mosinee	532
Schofield	288

As noted, Wausau residents primarily work in Wausau, but a sizeable number also commute to the Village of Weston. More than 500 people commute from Wausau to the City of Schofield and the Village of Rothschild for work.

Table A-11: Work Locations for Wausau Residents

Live in Wausau	
Work in	# Workers
Wausau	8,394
Weston	1,626
Schofield	609
Rothschild	530
Rib Mountain	457
Mosinee	434
Kronenwetter	22

Appendix B Metro Ride 2011 Service Overview

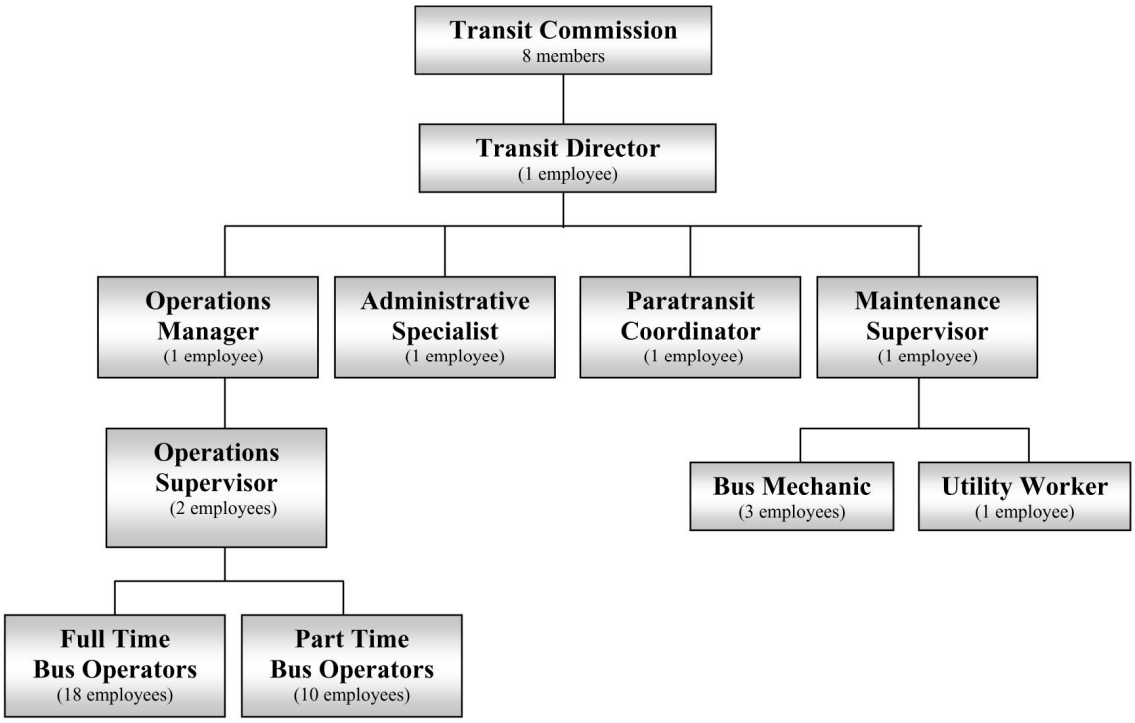
Introduction

Metro Ride operates bus and paratransit service in the Wausau Metropolitan area, providing service throughout the City of Wausau, as well as to parts of the Villages of Rothschild and Weston and the City of Schofield. Metro Ride provides 19 fixed routes, including 9 regular routes, and 10 express routes. Metro Ride Paratransit Service provides "curb to curb" service to ADA-eligible passengers who are unable to use the fixed route bus system due to physical or mental disabilities. The Metro Ride paratransit service area includes all locations within ¾ of a mile of a Metro Ride fixed route. This chapter provides an overview of the Metro Ride Program.

Organizational Structure

Metro Ride is a department of the City of Wausau. Figure B-1 presents an organization chart for Metro Ride. It is governed by an 8 member Transit Commission, which includes five members from Wausau, and one each from Rothschild, and Schofield and Weston. Metro Ride is headed by a transit director, and organized into 3 departments - operations, paratransit, and maintenance - each headed by either a supervisor or coordinator. There is also an administrative specialist who reports directly to the transit director. The operations manager is responsible for the fixed route bus operations, the paratransit coordinator is responsible for the Metro Ride paratransit service, and the maintenance supervisor is responsible for maintenance of the vehicles.

Figure B-1: Metro Ride Organization Chart



Since the previous study, an additional Transit Commission member was added from the Village of Weston due to service expansion into that community.

Fixed Route Service Description

Fixed route bus service is provided on 9 regular weekday routes, 2 regular routes operated exclusively on Saturdays and 9 weekday express routes throughout the City of Wausau, as well as in the Villages of Rothschild and Weston and the City of Schofield. Regular routes generally provide service throughout the service day from 6:15 AM to 6:30 PM weekdays, and 8:45 AM to 5:30 PM Saturdays during the school year. Metro Ride does not provide service on Sundays or during evening and overnight periods.

Express routes are open to the general public and are geared towards providing supplemental services during peak school periods. For the most part, the express routes operate only one or two trips in the morning and afternoon to coincide with school arrival and dismissal times. Two of the express routes provide more extensive service hours. The first is route X4 which operates all day service every 30 minutes (except between the hours of 8:30 to 11:30 AM). The second is route X9 which provides service every 30 minutes between 6:30 AM and 8:30 AM and 2:30 PM and 6:30 PM.

Table B-1 provides an overview of frequency and span for all of the fixed routes.

Table B-1: Frequency and Span of Service

Route	Weekday		Saturday	
	Frequency	Span	Frequency	Span
Regular Bus Service				
A	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
B	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
C	60 Minutes	6:00 AM to 6:30 PM	60 Minutes	9:00 AM to 5:30 PM
D	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
F	No service		30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:15 PM
G	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
H	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
I	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
J	30 Minutes	6:15 AM to 6:30 PM	30 Minutes	8:45 AM to 5:30 PM
K	30 Minutes	5:50 AM to 6:20 PM	30 Minutes	9:00 AM to 4:30 PM
L	No service		30 Minutes	9:30 AM to 5:00 PM
Express Service (operated only on school days)				
X1	2 Trips	7:00 AM to 7:30 AM, 2:55 PM to 3:30 PM	No Service	
X2	2 Trips	7:05 AM to 7:30 AM, 2:55 PM to 3:35 PM	No Service	
X3	2 Trips	7:05 AM to 7:25 AM, 3:05 PM to 3:28 PM	No Service	
X4	30 Minutes	6:30 AM to 8:30 AM, 11:30 AM to 6:00 PM	No Service	
X5	2 Trips	6:50 AM to 7:28 AM, 3:00 PM to 3:38 PM	No Service	
X6	2 Trips	7:03 AM to 7:26 AM, 3:00 PM to 3:15 PM	No Service	
X7	3 Trips	7:00 AM to 7:30 AM, 2:55 PM to 3:16 PM	No Service	
X9	30 Minutes	6:30 AM to 8:30 AM, 2:30 PM to 6:30 PM	No Service	
X10	1 Trip	2:55 PM to 3:05 PM	No Service	

Source: 2010 Local and Express bus route guides and schedules

The 9 regular routes operate on a "pulse system," with pulses occurring every 30 minutes in Downtown Wausau at the Transit Center. Eight of the nine regular routes operate on 30 minute headway, meeting every pulse at the Transit Center. The ninth route, Route C, operates on a 60 minute schedule and meets every other pulse.

Bus stop signs are located at every other block and at major traffic generators, and are the only locations where buses stop.

Below is a description of each of the regular bus routes:

- Route A – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and North Central Health Care Facilities in southeast Wausau via South Grand Avenue. Generators served by this route include North Central Health Care Facilities, Mount View Care Center, Wausau Municipal Airport, John Marshall Elementary School, Sturgeon Bluff Apartments, Riverview Towers East, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route B – This route is operated between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and Northcentral Technical College (NTC) in the northern part of the city, via 1st Avenue North and 3rd Avenue North. Generators include NTC, Thomas Jefferson Elementary School, Grant Elementary, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route C – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center, and the City of Schofield and Village of Rothschild, operating along Grand Avenue. Generators served by this route include Rothschild Elementary School, ShopKo, Schofield Elementary School, Sturgeon Bluff Apartments, the Social Services Office in Wausau, Riverview Tower, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 60 minutes, allowing one bus to operate this route all day on weekdays only.

- Route D – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and Kanneberg Plaza via North 3rd Street, Bridge Street, 6th Avenue North and 10th Avenue North. Generators served by this route include Kanneberg Plaza, Wausau West High School, Randolph Court Apartments, Newman High School, Saint Anne School, Grant Elementary, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes allowing one bus to operate all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route F – This route is operated between the North Central Health Care Facilities Shopko along Grand Avenue from southeast Wausau through the City of Schofield and into the Village of Rothschild. Generators served by this route include North Central Health Care Facilities, Mount View Care Center, Schofield Elementary, downtown Schofield, and ShopKo. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes allowing one bus to operate all day on Saturdays.

- Route G – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and ShopKo in West Wausau via Sherman Street. Generators served by this route include ShopKo, John Muir Middle School, Trinity Elementary School, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route H – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and North Wausau via North 6th Street and North 7th Street. Generators served by this route include American Legion Golf Course, Riverview Elementary School, Horace Mann Middle School, Franklin Elementary, Saint Michael's School, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route I – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and Aspirus Hospital and Clinic via Stewart Avenue. Generators served by this route include Aspirus Hospital and Clinic, Wausau Manor, Westhill Professional Center, Faith Christian Academy, Marshfield Clinic, University of Wisconsin-Marathon Campus, Trinity School, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route J – This route operates between the Downtown Wausau Transit Center and southwest Wausau via Thomas Street. Generators served by this route include G.D. Jones Elementary School, Our Savior's School, Wausau Social Services, Riverview Tower East, and Downtown Wausau. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays and Saturdays.

- Route K – This route is a loop that operates in Weston and Rothschild from Shopko along North Krueger Avenue, County Road X, Weston Avenue, and Alderson Street. Generators served by this route include Shopko, Mega Pick'n Save, Target, Goodwill, Aspirus Weston Clinic, Marshfield Clinic Weston Center, St. Clare's Hospital, Birchwood Heights, D.C. Everest High School, and D.C. Everest Middle School. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes, allowing one bus to operate on this route all day on weekdays. On Saturdays, Route K is interlined with Route L and provides service on 60 minute headways. *This route is scheduled to be discontinued at the end of 2011.*

- Route L – This route operates from Shopko through Rothschild to the Cedar Creek Mall along Grand Avenue and Business Highway 51. Generators served on this route include Shopko, Rothschild Post Office, downtown Rothschild, and the Cedar Creek Mall. Roundtrip travel time on this route is 30 minutes. This route is only operated on Saturdays and is interlined with Route K to provide service on 60 minute headways.

The nine express routes enhance the regular route network by accommodating increased passenger loads on school days. These routes only operate when school is in session (weekdays during the school year only). Most of these routes do not serve the Wausau Transit Center, bypassing downtown Wausau to provide direct service between neighborhoods around the community and Wausau schools. All but two of these routes provide one or two trips timed to arrive at Wausau schools before the "opening bell" and depart once schools let out. The exceptions, as noted earlier, are the X4, which provides all day service (minus a three hour block from 8:30 to 11:30 AM), and the X9 which operates during peak periods.

Express bus stops are signed differently than regular routes. The express bus route descriptions are provided below:

- Route X1 – This route operates between southeast Wausau and Wausau East High School via Grand Avenue and North 7th Street. Schools served by this route include the John Marshall School, Horace Mann Middle School, and Wausau East School. This route provides additional capacity to routes A, C, and H as well as providing a direct

connection between the southeast and northeast areas of Wausau. The morning trip does serve the Wausau Transit Center.

- Route X2 – This route operates between southeast Wausau and Wausau East High School via North 10th Street. Schools served by this route include the John Marshall School (only in the afternoon), Horace Mann Middle School, and Wausau East High School. This route provides additional capacity to routes A, C, and H as well as providing a direct connection between the southeast and northeast areas of Wausau. This route does not serve the Wausau Transit Center.

- Route X3 – This route operates between northeast Wausau and Wausau East High School. Schools served by this route include the Riverview School, Horace Mann Middle School, and Wausau East High School. This route provides additional capacity to route H and provides connections to areas of Wausau that are not served by route H. This route does not serve the Wausau Transit Center.

- Route X4 – This route operates between the Wausau Transit Center in downtown Wausau and East High School. This route provides 30 minute service all day, except between 8:30 AM and 11:30 AM, with midday service paid for by the Board of Education. One bus is necessary to run this route all day. This route meets the pulses at the Wausau Transit Center during its time of operation. While this route does operate all day service on weekdays, it does not operate on Saturdays or during summer months. This route provides service to the Franklin School, Saint Michael's School, and Wausau East High School.

- Route X5 – This route operates between southwest Wausau and John Muir Middle School. This route provides service to G.D. Jones School, Faith Christian Academy, John Muir Middle School, Newman Middle School, Newman High School, Wausau West High School, and Saint Anne School. This very circuitous route provides additional capacity to routes D, G, I, and J and provides connections between the areas of Wausau that are west of the Wisconsin River. This route does not serve the Wausau Transit Center.

- Route X6 – This route operates between northwest Wausau and John Muir Middle School. This route provides service to Wausau West High School, Newman Middle and High Schools, and John Muir Middle School. This route provides additional capacity to routes B and D while providing a direct connection through northwest Wausau. This route does not serve the Wausau Transit Center.

- Route X7 – This route operates between the Wausau Transit Center and Horace Mann Middle School via North 6th Street. Schools served by this route include Saint Michael, Franklin, and Horace Mann Middle. This route provides additional capacity to route H, providing a more direct route to Horace Mann Middle School from the Wausau Transit Center.

- Route X9 – This route operates from the Wausau Transit Center to the Terrace Heights Apartments. Service is provided only during peak periods when school is open. This route operates to the Wausau Transit Center, meeting every peak period "pulse." Generators served by this route include Terrace Heights Apartments, Saint Michael School and Downtown Wausau. Service is provided using one bus.

- Route X10 – This route connects West Wausau to East Wausau along Bridge Street. The route connects Newman Middle and High Schools with downtown Wausau during afternoons only. This route provides service to Newman Middle and High Schools, St. Anne School, Grant School, Franklin School and St. Michael School. This route provides additional capacity to Route D. This route does not serve the Wausau Transit Center.

The average roundtrip route length for Metro Ride regular routes is approximately 8.5 miles. The average route length is skewed, however, by route C which is a one-hour route and thus has the longest roundtrip route length: 16.2 miles. The average route length for the eight 30 minute routes considered is 7.7 miles long. The shortest route is route A with a roundtrip mileage of 6.5 miles. Route lengths are presented in Table B-2, which also presents the average scheduled speed for each route (e.g. route miles divided by scheduled running time). The average speed for Metro Ride regular routes is 15.4 miles per hour, ranging from 17.2 miles per hour for route L to 13 miles per hour for route A.

Table B-2: Round Trip Route Mileage

Route	Route Miles	Average Speed (MPH)
A	6.5	13
B	8	16
C	16.2	16.2
D	7	14
F	7.7	15.4
G	7	14
H	8.5	17
I	7.3	14.6
J	7.8	15.6
K	8.4	16.8
L	8.6	17.2
Average	*8.5*	*15.4*

Source: Metro Ride

On an average weekday, Metro Ride regular route vehicles travel 1,701 miles over 111 hours. On Saturdays, Metro Ride regular route vehicles travel 1,177 miles over 78 hours. The average number of revenue miles and hours are presented in Table B-3. The longer routes operate more revenue miles each day, while the shorter routes operate fewer miles. This is because all routes have, for the most part, the same span of service and, with the exception of route C, the same number of trips per day as well as the same number of revenue hours. Saturday shows a similar

pattern to the weekday pattern, with the exception being routes K and L, which are interlined. These routes operate half the number of trips as the other routes on Saturdays, thus have half the number of miles and hours as the other routes.

Table B-3: Average Daily Vehicle Hours and Mileage

Route	Weekday		Saturday (School Year)	
	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours
Regular Route				
A	161.25	12.25	115.75	8.75
B	198.25	12.25	142.25	8.75
C	209.35	12.50	N/A	N/A
D	173.25	12.25	124.25	8.75
F	N/A	N/A	124.45	8.50
G	173.25	12.25	124.25	8.75
H	210.75	12.25	151.25	8.75
I	180.75	12.25	129.65	8.75
J	193.40	12.25	138.80	8.75
K	200.50	12.50	62.39	7.50
L	N/A	N/A	64.07	7.50
Total	*1,700.75*	*110.75*	*1,177.11*	*84.75*
Express Route				
X1	41.59	1.08	No service	
X2	34.54	1.08	No service	
X3	39.92	0.72	No service	
X4	64.80	8.50	No service	
X5	30.06	1.27	No service	
X6	24.99	0.63	No service	
X7	7.96	0.93	No service	
X9	76.80	6.00	No service	
X10	11.19	0.17	No service	
Total	*331.85*	*20.38*	*No service*	
Grand Total	*2,032.60*	*131.13*	*1,177.11*	*84.75*

Source: Metro Ride Operator Schedules (Miles_2011)

Metro Ride Fare Structure

Metro Ride has a straightforward fare structure, as seen in Table B-4. The base fare for fixed route services is $1.25, with 10 tokens available for $7.50. A monthly bus pass is available for frequent riders, costing $30.00 a month for adults. Half fare or a half-priced monthly pass is available to senior citizens and disabled passengers. Students ride for $1.00, or pay $15.00 for a monthly pass. Students also have the option of buying 10 tickets for $6.00. Passengers can transfer for free between two routes; however transfers are only available at the downtown Transit Center or at locations where multiple bus routes intersect. Transfers are valid only for the next trip on leaving the Transit Center. The fare for Metro Ride Paratransit is $2.00 per trip.

Table B-4: Fare Structure

Fare Category	Cash	Tokens	Tickets	Monthly Pass
Adults	$1.25	10 for $7.50	N/A	$30.00
Senior Citizen/Disabled	$0.60	N/A	N/A	$15.00
Student	$1.00	N/A	10 for $6.00	$15.00
Metro Ride Paratransit	$2.00	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Metro Ride, 2009 Fare Rates

In 2008 a fare change raised the base fare from $1.00 to $1.25, with corresponding changes to other fare categories.

Metro Ride Paratransit Service Description

Metro Ride Paratransit Service is the ADA service provided by Metro Ride. Service is available within ¾ of a mile of any bus route, and operates only when regular bus routes are in operation. The service is operated by Badger Care-A-Van under contract to Metro Ride. It is a shared ride service, which means the van may not necessarily take passengers non-stop to their destination, rather the paratransit van may make other drop-offs and pick-ups along the way. The service is available for patrons who because of mental or physical disabilities are not able to use regular Metro Ride buses, all of which are ADA accessible. The service is a curb-to-curb service, which means that drivers can only assist passengers getting into and out of the paratransit vehicle; operators cannot assist patrons in getting to the vehicle.

Eligibility for paratransit service is determined by Metro Ride. Passengers can be certified to use the service for a maximum of two years, after which it is the passenger's responsibility to apply for re-certification. Passengers are notified 60 days prior to the expiration of certification. "Conditional eligibility" may be granted to some riders where only ADA eligible trips may be made on paratransit, with the fixed route bus service providing all other trips. To be certified to use paratransit, passengers need to contact Metro Ride and provide documentation of disability and duration of the disability if it is a short term condition.

Certified riders are allowed to carry packages and bring guests on paratransit trips. Riders are allowed a maximum of three packages of grocery bag size or similar. Personal car attendants may ride for free when traveling with a certified passenger. One passenger may ride with a certified passenger, but must pay full fare if an adult, or for free if the passenger is a child. ADA eligible guests from out of town must contact Metro Ride to obtain a 21-day Metro Ride certification. Service animals can ride for free, but the passenger needs to inform Metro Ride before riding.

A no-show is recorded if the passenger who has scheduled a ride fails to ride. If a passenger intends not to take the ride, he or she must contact Metro Ride at least one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. After 3 no-shows in a 60 day time period, a passenger will be suspended from Metro Ride paratransit for 30 days. A 60 day suspension will occur if a

passenger accumulates an additional 3 no-shows within a 12 month period after the previous suspension.

Table B-5 presents the operating statistics for the paratransit service. In 2009 the service carried a total of 28,140 passengers, averaging around 109 per weekday and 7 on Saturdays. A total of twenty-eight vehicles are dedicated to the service, with a total of one vehicle in operation on Saturdays. On an average weekday, paratransit service operates 73 revenue hours and travels 1,261 miles. On Saturdays the one paratransit vehicle is in service for about 4 hours, traveling an average of 76 miles. In 2009, the paratransit operated 18,718 hours, traveling 325,467 miles.

Table B-5: Operating Statistics

Category	Average Weekday	Average Saturday	Annual Total
Ridership	109	7	28,140
Peak Vehicles	28	1	28
Revenue Hours	73	4	18,718
Revenue Miles	1,261	76	325,467

Source: 2009 National Transit Database

The paratransit service has grown significantly since the previous study. In 2005, the paratransit service used 6 vehicles and they use 28 in 2011. Also, the paratransit service carried 18,061 passengers in 2005. In 2011, that number was 28,140, 55.8 percent higher. The amount of service (hours and miles) has increased nearly fourfold during the 5-year period as well.

Financial Information

Metro Ride finances are made up of its operating expenses and its revenue sources. The capital program is presented in later in this chapter. Operating expenses include vehicle operations, which represents the largest portion of operating expenses, costs paid for paratransit operation, vehicle maintenance, non-vehicle maintenance, and general/administration costs. Table B-6 provides an overview of the Metro Ride 2011 estimated operating expenses.

Table B-6: Operating Expense Summary (2011 Estimated)

Expense Object Class	Amount	Percent of Budget
Vehicle Operations	$2,416,582.24	55.61%
Paratransit	$808,046.18	18.59%
Vehicle Maintenance	$380,849.87	8.76%
Non-Vehicle Maintenance	$147,879.96	3.40%
General Administration	$592,558.73	13.63%
Total	$4,345,916.98	100.00%

Source: 2011 Metro Ride Operating Budget

Table B-7 provides a summary of 2011 estimated revenue sources. Approximately 11 percent of revenue is projected to come from the farebox, with another 57 percent from Federal and State Operating Assistance. The remaining 32 percent comes from the City of Wausau property tax, and other local sources including the municipalities served by Metro Ride, Marathon County, and the Wausau School District.

Table B-7: Revenue Summary (2011 Estimated)

Revenue Source	Amount	Percent of Revenue
Federal Operating Assistance	$1,347,234.26	31.00%
State Operating Assistance	$1,129,938.42	26.00%
State Elderly and Disabled	$77,537.62	1.78%
Marathon County Surcharge	$106,831.51	2.46%
Marathon County Local Share	$83,566.72	1.92%
Net Local Share of Operating Expenses (municipal)	$210,605.26	4.85%
Operating Revenue/Farebox	$464,361.27	10.69%
Contracted Services	$170,848.00	3.93%
City of Wausau Property Tax	$742,100.92	17.08%
Wausau School District	$12,243.00	0.28%
Other Income	$650.00	0.01%
Total	$4,345,916.98	100.00%

Source: 2011 Metro Ride Operating Budget

Capital Resources

Metro Ride capital resources include its vehicle fleet, bus stop signs, administrative and maintenance base, Transit Center, and shelters located throughout Wausau. The paratransit vehicle fleet is owned by the contract operator. The Metro Ride administration and maintenance facility is located at 420 Plumer Street in Wausau. The Transit Center, recently upgraded and expanded in 2005, is located in downtown Wausau at 555 Jefferson Street near the Marathon County Courthouse and the Wausau Center Mall. A picture of the facility is included as Figure B-2.

Figure B-2: Picture of the Transit Center

Metro Ride owns eight bus shelters at the locations shown in Table B-8.

Table B-8: Shelter Locations

Shelter Location	Routes Served
North Central Health Care Center	A
Surgeon Bluff Apartments – Elderly Housing	A, C
Riverview Towers Apartment – Elderly Housing	A, C
Northcentral Technical College	B
Kannenberg Plaza – Elderly Housing	D
Aspirus Wausau Hospital	I
Marshfield Clinic	I
Horace Mann Middle School.	H

Source: Metro Ride 2011

Metro Ride vehicles are listed in Table B-9. Metro Ride has 25 active buses and uses 20 buses during peak service. The spare ratio is 25%. Metro Ride has 6 non-revenue vehicles for administration and maintenance. Metro Ride also has 6 Gillig low floor buses on order.

Table B-9: Wausau Area Transit System Vehicle Roster

Number in Fleet	Year	Make	Model	Seats/Stands	Projected Replacement
Fixed Route Revenue Vehicles					
1	1995	Gillig	Phantom-35 Foot	37/21	2007
5	1995	Gillig	Phantom-35 Foot	43/42	2007
1	1996	Gillig	Phantom-35 foot	37/21	2008
5	1998	Gillig	Phantom-35 foot	37/21	2010
4	1998	Gillig	Phantom-40 foot	45/38	2010
9	2009	Gillig	Low Floor	32/53	2021
Non-Revenue Vehicles					
1	1990	Dodge	Ram 150	N/A	N/A
1	1997	Ford	F-Superduty	N/A	N/A
1	1998	Chevrolet	Cheyenne 3500	N/A	N/A
1	1999	Chevy	Venture	N/A	N/A
1	2005	Dodge	Caravan	N/A	N/A
1	2011	Ford	F450	N/A	N/A
Vehicles on Order					
6	2011	Gillig	Low Floor	32/53	2023

Source: Metro Ride 2011

The five year capital program is presented below in Table B-10. This program provides for the replacement of vehicles and other critical components used for the operation of Metro Ride and Metro Ride Paratransit Service. The total cost of the capital program is $6.5 million dollars over five years. Of that amount the federal share is approximately $5.2 million, with the local share responsible for the rest. There are no projects scheduled in 2011 or in 2015. The largest planned expenditures are in 2013 and 2014 with to the purchase of 5 hybrid transit buses in each year.

Table B-10: Capital Program (2011-2015)

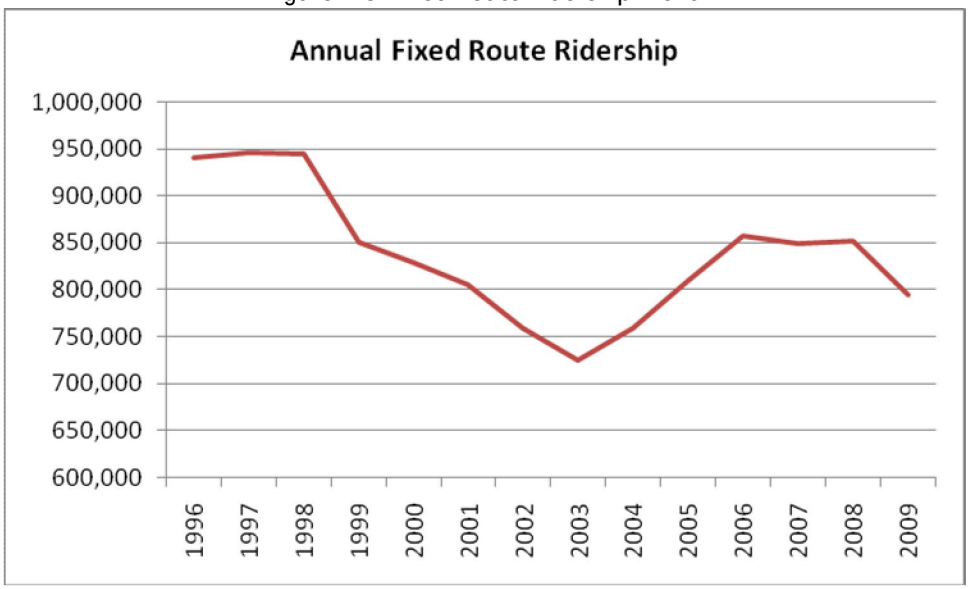
Project Description	Year	Total Cost	Federal Share	Local Share
Refrigerant Recovery Unit	2012	$7,500	$6,000	$1,500
Computer Replacement	2012	$22,850	$18,280	$4,570
Spill Containment System	2012	$20,000	$16,000	$4,000
Parts Washer	2012	$7,200	$5,760	$1,440
Floor Scrubber	2012	$56,500	$45,200	$11,300
Annual Total	*2012*	*$114,050*	*$91,240*	*$22,810*
Hybrid Transit Buses (5)	2013	$3,099,784	$2,479,828	$619,957
Annual Total	*2013*	*$3,099,784*	*$2,479,828*	*$619,957*
Hybrid Transit Buses (5)	2014	$3,233,774	$2,587,019	$646,755
Annual Total	*2014*	*$3,233,774*	*$2,587,019*	*$646,755*
Grand Total 2011-2015		*$6,447,608*	*$5,158,087*	*$1,289,522*

Source: Metro Ride Capital Improvement Plan 2011-2015

Historical Trend 1996-2009

The historical trend discussed below is based on National Transit Database reports from 1996 to 2009. Total fixed route ridership declined 15 percent over the period. Ridership increased following the previous study from 2003 to 2006, equalized, but then decreased by 7 percent from 2008 to 2009. Some of the recent decline is related to the poor economic conditions nationwide. During entire 13-year period, there were also 3 fare increases. Figure B-3 shows the trend in fixed route ridership from 1996 to 2009.

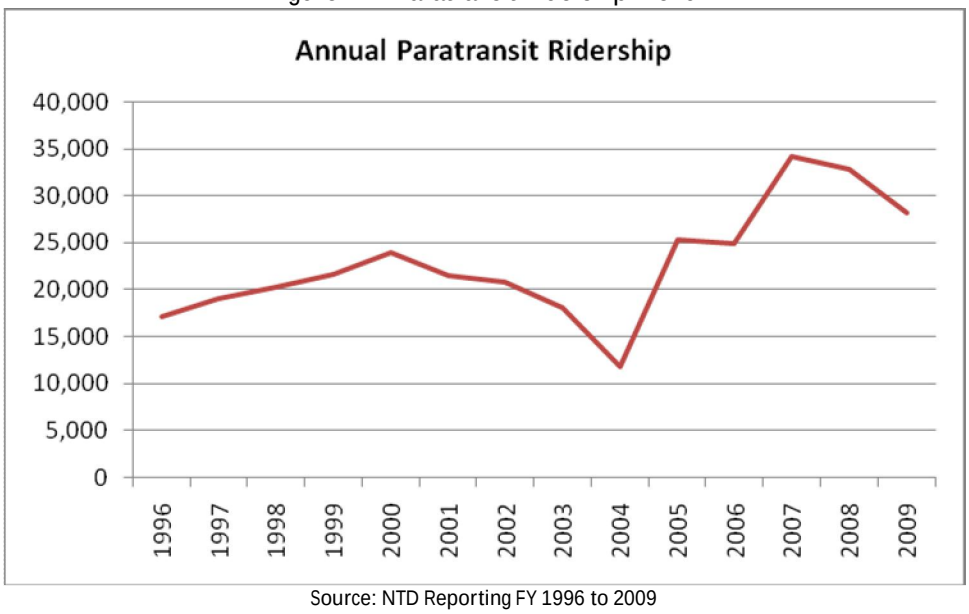
Figure B-3: Fixed Route Ridership Trend



Source: NTD Reporting FY 1996 to 2009

Paratransit ridership increased from 1996 to 2009 by 65 percent. Paratransit ridership peaked in 2007 and has been declining in the last couple of years. The paratransit system drastically increased its service in 2005 when peak vehicles were increased from 6 to 14, then to 28 in 2006. Revenue miles and hours increased more than fourfold from 2004 to 2005 and has fluctuated year-to-year since then, but have remained high. Figure B-4 shows the trend in paratransit ridership from 1996 to 2009.

Figure B-4: Paratransit Ridership Trend



Source: NTD Reporting FY 1996 to 2009

Table B-11 presents the service trends over the last 6 years for both fixed route and paratransit service. During the period there was fluctuation from year to year, but fixed route service remained almost the same between 1996 and 2009 but paratransit service grew dramatically as previously mentioned.

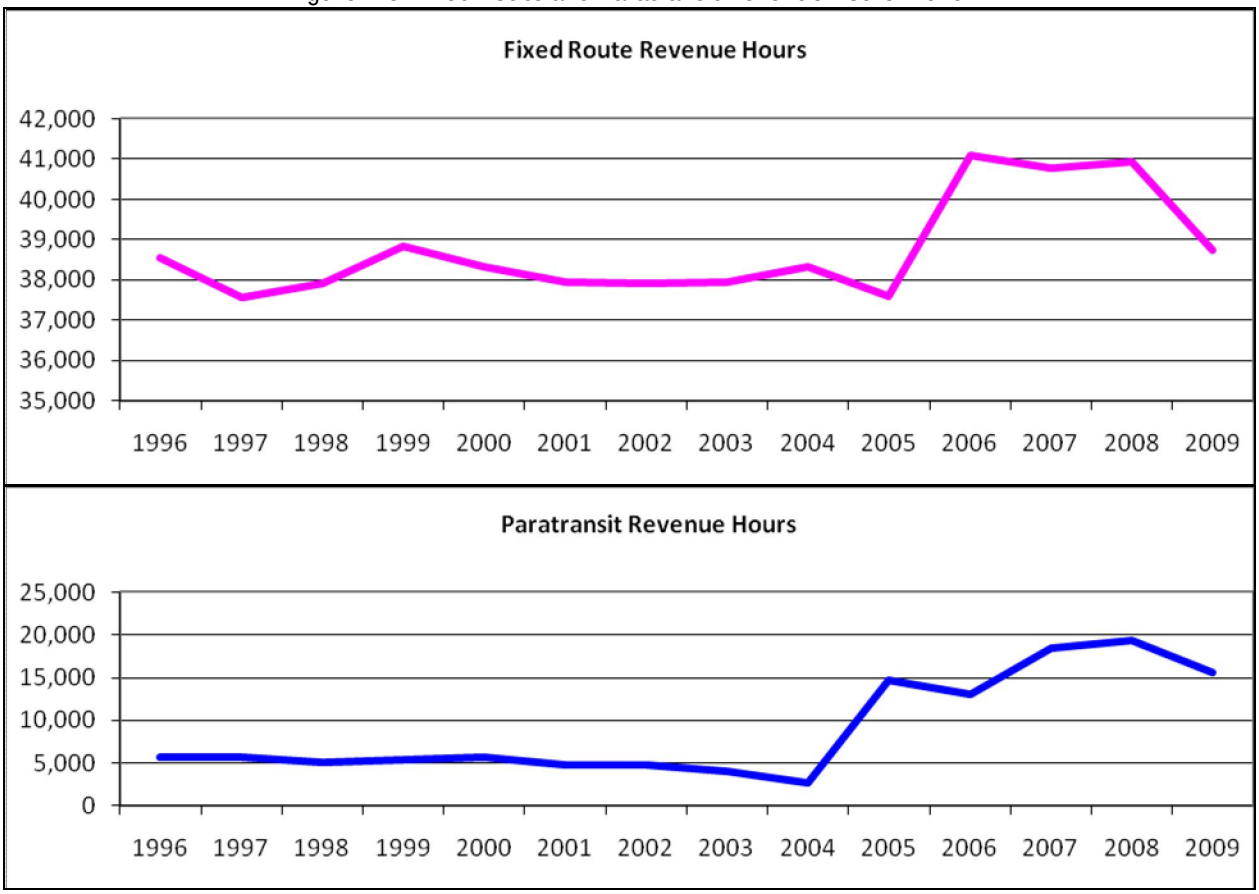
Table B-11: Service Trends

Year	Revenue Hours		Revenue Miles		Peak Vehicles	
	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Fixed Route	Paratransit
1996	38,541	5,638	553,916	76,878	20	8
1997	37,562	5,721	557,047	84,507	21	9
1998	37,920	5,044	558,796	72,592	21	5
1999	38,827	5,350	564,311	80,811	21	6
2000	38,327	5,758	556,607	87,538	21	7
2001	37,961	4,738	556,023	77,700	21	6
2002	37,929	4,781	557,007	77,450	20	6
2003	37,946	4,064	556,501	66,833	20	6
2004	38,315	2,711	555,801	42,354	21	6
2005	37,596	14,658	535,183	235,598	21	14
2006	41,100	13,046	588,475	195,862	22	28
2007	40,776	18,386	578,288	270,438	22	28
2008	40,925	19,373	569,706	288,890	22	28
2009	38,738	15,569	540,514	251,065	21	28
Total Change	*0.5%*	*176.1%*	*-2.4%*	*226.6%*	*5.0%*	*250.0%*

Source: NTD Reporting FY 1996 to 2009

Figure B-5 provides a better picture of the annual fluctuation in service for both fixed route and paratransit service from 1996 to 2009. Fixed route service provision peaked in 2006, remained steady from 2006 to 2008, and then dropped back to earlier service levels. Paratransit service started to increase in 2005 and has remained high despite a recent drop in service level.

Figure B-5: Fixed Route and Paratransit Revenue Hours Trend



Source: NTD Reporting FY 1996 to 2009

The financial trends for the six year period between 1996 and 2009 are presented in Table B-12. The cost to operate the fixed route system grew by 80.2 percent and the cost to operate the paratransit system grew by 267.7 percent, not surprising considering the 226.6 percent increase in revenue miles and 250 percent increase in vehicles operated during the same period for the paratransit service. From 1996 to 2001, NTD reported farebox revenue for both fixed route and paratransit service together. From 1996 to 2001, farebox revenue decreased by 5.4 percent. From 2002 to 2009, when revenues were reported by mode, fixed route revenues increased by 23.9 percent and paratransit revenues increased by 284.2 percent, due to increased service level and ridership and a change in paratransit fare policy.

Table B-12: Financial Trends

Year	Modal Cost		Farebox Revenue	
	Fixed Route	Paratransit	Fixed Route	Paratransit
1996	$1,707,808	$173,514	$352,555	
1997	$1,780,573	$198,487	$356,712	
1998	$1,861,708	$212,354	$313,513	
1999	$2,047,091	$228,620	$345,380	
2000	$2,116,818	$250,499	$328,763	
2001	$2,219,677	$257,203	$333,427	
2002	$2,251,820	$301,576	$320,378	$37,580
2003	$2,432,306	$290,345	$328,864	$36,122
2004	$2,578,239	$226,875	$348,654	$23,644
2005	$2,695,964	$535,916	$366,357	$82,064
2006	$2,956,142	$491,171	$388,623	$112,284
2007	$3,119,589	$702,100	$386,263	$194,286
2008	$3,310,877	$714,120	$450,341	$184,953
2009	$3,078,200	$638,033	$436,701	$144,394
Total Change	*80.2%*	*267.7%*	*23.9%*	*284.2%*

Source: NTD Reporting FY 1996 to 2009

Overall, fixed route service levels have generally remained the same with a peak 2006-2008, but ridership has declined with a smaller peak from 2006-2008. Paratransit service has dramatically increased, as has ridership. Costs have risen across the board, but farebox revenue has done so as well.

Changes Since the Previous TDP (2006)

Since the previous TDP was completed in 2006, Metro Ride has made a number of changes to the bus network. First, the bus system name changed from Wausau Area Transit Service (WATS) and WATS+ Paratransit to Metro Ride. Also, a new Transit Center was constructed that provides passenger and driver amenities and a clean, safe environment for transferring between bus routes.

Transit service to Weston and a partnership with the Village was added since the previous study. Route K is a large loop that starts at the Shopko on the Rothschild/Schofield line and circulates throughout Weston serving both shopping centers and medical centers. However, Route K is scheduled to be discontinued at the end of 2011 due to the loss of local funding – the Village of Weston is no longer willing to pay for the service due to low ridership.

In addition to Route K, Routes F and L were also added since the previous TDP. Routes F and L operate only on Saturdays. Route F connects the North Central Health Care Facilities in Wausau to the Shopko on the Schofield/Rothschild line and Route L continues that service from the Shopko to the Cedar Creek Mall. These routes replace service previously operated by Route C on Saturdays.

Route E and Express Route X8 were discontinued since the last study. Express Route X10 was added for one trip in the afternoon peak period and it follows part of the route that Route E used to follow. Route I was also modified to serve some generators previously served by Route E. Part of Express Route X8 is covered by Express Routes X2 and X9 and by Routes H and J, but Hawthorne Hills Elementary School is no longer served.

Finally, fares were increased in 2008. Ridership did not immediately react negatively to the increase, however ridership was decreased more likely due to poor economic conditions in general as opposed to in reaction to the fare increase. Overall farebox revenue did increase following the fare increase but was then reduced after ridership decreased.

Appendix C PEER GROUP ANALYSIS

Introduction

This technical memorandum presents a peer and trend analysis, comparing Metro Ride to similar systems. The two peer groups --- a nationwide peer analysis and a Wisconsin systems peer group -- were developed originally for the 1999 TDP, used again for the 2005 TDP, and are used once again for this analysis, to provide both continuity and an excellent trend analysis along the timeline of the three studies.

Data for the peer analyses herein were taken from the 2009 National Transit Database (NTD) summary reports, the last full year for which data on all the peer systems is available. The trend analysis, to determine how the performance of Metro Ride has changed over time versus the changes in both the nationwide and Wisconsin peer groups, compares 2009 data with the data from the 2003 NTD reports as contained in the previous TDP.

Peer Group

The criteria used to select system peers use characteristics including service area population, climate, the amount of vehicle miles and hours of service provided and number of peak vehicles. Other criteria used to a lesser degree include annual ridership and operating cost.

The systems for the nationwide peer group selected in 1999 were all located in northern climates and were a similar size as Metro Ride. The seven systems that make up the nationwide peer group include:

- Battle Creek, MI
- Billings, MT
- Bloomington, IN
- Missoula, MT
- Great Falls, MT
- Rochester, MN
- Sioux City, IA

The selected Wisconsin peers are all Wisconsin cities with less than 80,000 people. The five Wisconsin cities that are peers to Wausau are:

- Beloit
- Eau Claire
- Janesville

- La Crosse
- Oshkosh

Table C-1 presents an overview of both the nationwide and Wisconsin peers. Data presented on this table includes the service area population, operating statistics, and financial data.

Table C-1: Wausau Area Transit Peer Systems Overview

System	Service Area Population	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Peak Vehicles	Unlinked Passengers	Operating Cost	Farebox Revenue
Nationwide Peers							
Battle Creek, MI	83,000	388,148	26,559	9	523,237	$2,681,343	$329,832
Billings, MT	100,000	554,716	38,042	20	675,340	$3,255,724	$287,234
Bloomington, IN	69,291	963,264	89,855	30	3,027,877	$5,100,214	$1,535,865
Missoula, MT	69,999	635,552	42,424	17	828,887	$3,233,660	$414,869
Great Falls, MT	63,000	416,660	30,395	13	369,472	$2,086,795	$189,011
Rochester, MN	104,230	978,883	62,466	27	1,584,502	$4,565,035	$1,871,469
Sioux City, IA	102,798	612,625	45,411	21	1,157,470	$3,759,919	$817,995
Average	84,617	649,978	47,879	20	1,166,684	3,526,099	778,039
Wisconsin Peers							
Beloit	35,871	326,023	20,885	9	312,832	$1,742,661	$198,110
Eau Claire	69,300	681,865	49,405	16	951,405	$3,273,179	$684,416
Janesville	62,540	454,166	28,979	13	442,602	$2,644,287	$385,161
La Crosse	78,000	774,080	54,962	14	1,189,841	$4,038,060	$552,234
Oshkosh	65,810	538,328	39,785	12	913,226	$2,897,511	$476,075
Average	62,304	554,892	38,803	13	761,981	2,919,140	459,199
Wausau, WI	45,513	540,514	38,738	21	794,121	$3,078,200	$436,701

Source of Data: National Transit Database, 2009

Financial Efficiency

Financial efficiency, or how well resources are used to put out service, is measured based on three key indicators: cost per mile, cost per hour, and cost per peak vehicle. These indicators present the total cost to provide the service divided by specific unit of service. Lower costs per unit of service show better financial efficiency.

Generally speaking, Metro Ride is in the low to mid-range for financial efficiency when expressed in terms of cost per mile or cost per hour, for both groups. However, the percentage difference from the average is in the 2 to 3 percent range other than compared to Wisconsin peers in cost per mile. On a cost per mile basis, Metro Ride service is 2.3 percent more expensive to provide than the nationwide peer group, however it is 7.2 percent more expensive than the Wisconsin peer group. This places Metro Ride 5th of 8 for the national peers and 5th of 6 for the Wisconsin peers.

In terms of cost per hour, Metro Ride is 2.2 percent more expensive to operate than the nationwide peers and 2.6 percent more expensive to operate than its Wisconsin peers. Again, Metro Ride is among the middle of both groups, 5th of 8 for the national peer group, and 4rd of 6 for the Wisconsin group.

Metro Ride ranks exceptionally well in terms of cost per peak vehicle, costing 22.8 percent less than the nationwide peer average and 35.2 percent less than the Wisconsin peer average. To that end, Metro Ride ranks first in terms of cost per peak vehicle with both the nationwide peers and the Wisconsin peers. Metro Ride operates 21 peak vehicles, including regular and express routes, which is the highest number of peak vehicles in the Wisconsin peer group, though it ranks third (tied) among the national peers.

Overall, Metro Ride costs are comparable its Wisconsin peer systems, although lagging on cost per hour and cost per mile against the national peer group.

Financial efficiency indicators are presented in Table C-2.

Table C-2: Financial Efficiency (2009)

Statistic	Cost per Mile		Cost per Hour		Cost per Peak Vehicle	
	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin
Lowest	$4.66	$4.80	$56.76	$66.25	$146,580.95	$146,580.95
Highest	$6.91	$5.82	$100.96	$91.25	$297,927.00	$288,432.86
Average	$5.57	$5.31	$77.72	$77.45	$189,939.64	$226,300.30
Metro Ride	$5.69	$5.69	$79.46	$79.46	$146,580.95	$146,580.95
% Difference	2.30%	7.18%	2.24%	2.60%	-22.83%	-35.23%
Rank*	5 of 8	5 of 6	5 of 8	4 of 6	1 of 8	1 of 6

*Lower cost is better
Source of Data: National Transit Database, 2009

Service Effectiveness

Service effectiveness measures the amount of service that is consumed per unit of service that is provided. The service effectiveness measures, which include passengers per mile, passengers per hour, and passengers per peak vehicle, are presented in Table C-3. More passengers per unit of service shows greater service effectiveness.

Metro Ride service effectiveness lags about 10 percent below the average for the nationwide peers, but exceeds the average for its Wisconsin peers by about 10 percent for passengers per vehicle mile and hour. When compared to either group on passengers per mile and passengers per hour, Metro Ride ranks in the middle, 4th of 8 on both measures for the national group and 3rd of 6 for the Wisconsin group. Metro Ride carried 1.5 passengers per mile in 2009 compared to 1.3 for its Wisconsin peers but 1.6 for the national peers. Metro Ride carried 20.5 passengers per hour compared the national peer average of 22 but again exceeded the Wisconsin peer average of 18.8.

In terms of passengers per peak vehicle, Metro Ride lags further behind both peer groups, carrying about 31 percent fewer passengers per peak vehicle than the nationwide peers and 35 percent fewer than the Wisconsin peers. This reflects the high number of peak vehicles in the system needed to provide express services but average overall ridership level achieved by the system as a whole. Metro Ride ranked 4th of 6 for the Wisconsin peer group on this statistic, and 6th of 8 for the national peer group.

Table C-3: Service Effectiveness (2009)

Statistic	Passengers per Mile		Passengers per Hour		Passengers per Peak Vehicle	
	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin
Lowest	0.89	0.96	12.2	15.0	28,421	34,046
Highest	3.14	1.70	33.7	23.0	100,929	84,989
Average	1.63	1.31	22.0	18.8	54,831	57,872
Metro Ride	1.47	1.47	20.5	20.5	37,815	37,815
% Difference	-9.85%	11.93%	-6.64%	8.91%	-31.03%	-34.66%
Rank*	4 of 8	3 of 6	4 of 8	3 of 6	6 of 8	4 of 6

* Higher is better
Source of Data: National Transit Database, 2009

Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness measures tie the two previous sets of measures together by looking at how well resources are utilized to produce trips, and how much of the cost of those trips is being covered by fare revenue. There are two key indictors for cost effectiveness -- cost per passenger and farebox recovery. Lower cost per passenger and higher farebox recovery are considered to be more cost effective.

Cost per passenger is the ratio of the total cost to provide Metro Ride service and the number of passengers carried. The cost effectiveness indicators are presented in Table C-4. For cost per passenger, Metro Ride costs are about 1 percent lower than the nationwide peers, and it ranks 4th out of 8 systems. Metro Ride fares better against the Wisconsin peers; in this group its cost per passenger is about 10 percent lower than the peer average and it ranks 4th of 6 systems.

Farebox recovery measures the percent of the operating cost recovered by fares paid by passengers. This ratio is guided not only by the number of passengers carried and operating costs for the system, but by policy determinations made locally regarding fare policy – e.g., the base fare level, the types and percent discounts given, etc.

Metro Ride collects about 14.2 percent of its cost from passengers, which is about 26.9 percent lower than the nationwide peer average and 7.8 percent lower than the Wisconsin peer average.

Once again, Metro Ride performs as an average system in both groups, although its performance is much closer to the average of the Wisconsin peer group in farebox recovery than the national peer group and it outperforms both groups in terms of cost per passenger.

Table C-4: Cost Effectiveness (2009)

Statistic	Cost per Passenger		Farebox Recovery	
	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin
Lowest	$1.68	$3.17	8.8%	11.4%
Highest	$5.65	$5.97	41.0%	20.9%
Average	$3.90	$4.31	19.4%	15.4%
Metro Ride	$3.88	$3.88	14.2%	14.2%
% Difference	-0.64%	-10.07%	-26.91%	-7.82%
Rank	4 of 8	4 of 6	4 of 8	4 of 6

* Lower cost is better; higher farebox recovery is better
Source of Data: National Transit Database, 2009

Service Provided per Capita

Metro Ride, with is combination of regular and express routes, dramatically exceeds both peer group averages on the amount of service provided per capita. In fact, Metro Ride ranks number one on miles and hours per capita and peak vehicles per capita among the Wisconsin peer group and second in the national peer group on miles and hours per capita. Metro Ride also ranks first in peak vehicles per capita among the national peers. This performance is excellent, particularly given that the Metro Ride system performed strongly on passengers per hour and mile of service provided against its Wisconsin peers which demonstrates that the service in the aggregate is well-received and used by the community. Even while lagging by less than 10 percent against the national peers, Metro Ride ranked 4th of 8th on these same two service effectiveness measures, an average performance.

Table C-5: Amount of Service Provided per Capita (2009)

Statistic	Miles per Capita		Hours per Capita		Peak Vehicles per 10,000 People	
	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin
Lowest	4.68	7.26	0.32	0.46	1.08	1.79
Highest	13.90	11.88	1.30	0.85	4.61	4.61
Average	7.88	8.86	0.59	0.61	2.36	2.10
Metro Ride	11.88	11.88	0.85	0.85	4.61	4.61
% Difference	50.69%	34.06%	44.37%	38.73%	95.28%	119.41%
Rank	2 of 8	1 of 6	2 of 8	1 of 6	1 of 8	1 of 6

* More service is better
Source of Data: National Transit Database, 2009

Service Span Comparison

Service span refers to the number of hours that revenue service operates. The peer service span is presented on Table C-6 for weekday, Saturday, and Sunday. The weekday and Saturday span does not compare very well with the peers, as both the Wisconsin and nationwide peers provide a wider span of service on both weekdays and Saturdays. One Wisconsin peer and one national peer provide service on Sunday, something Metro Ride does not.

Furthermore, Metro Ride does not provide Saturday service during the summer, further eroding the system's performance against its peers on the Saturday span measure.

Table C-6: Service Span Comparison (2009)

Statistic	Weekday Span		Saturday Span		Sunday Span	
	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin	Nationwide	Wisconsin
Lowest	12.00	12.00	8.00	8.00	10.00	11.00
Highest	17.00	17.75	11.50	12.00	10.00	11.00
Average	14.07	15.15	9.83	10.50	10.00	11.00
Metro Ride	12.50	12.50	9.00	9.00	N/A	N/A
% Difference	-11.17%	-17.49%	-8.47%	-14.29%	-100.00%	-100.00%
Rank	6 of 8 (tie)	4 of 6	6 of 8	5 of 6	N/A	N/A

* Wider span is better
Source of Data: National Transit Database, 2009

Conclusion

Metro Ride provides more service per capita than almost all of its peers in both groups (Bloomington IN is the only exception), and the service is generally effective, although more so against its Wisconsin peers than the national peer group. On service effectiveness measures, Metro Ride is average among its peers, with its 20.5 passengers carried per hour or 1.5 passengers carried per mile, but lags with respect to passengers per peak vehicles.

The cost of operating service (financial efficiency) is roughly average based on vehicle hours and miles of service provided, and exceptional on a peak vehicle basis due to the size of the peak express bus network.

A significant concern is the span of service, which is lower than almost all of its peers both on weekdays and Saturdays, with no summer Saturday service. Only one system from either peer group operates Sunday service, so having no service on Sundays is not unusual among Metro Ride and its peers.

Trend Analysis

Five sets of data provide a comparison of how Metro Ride has performed over time compared to its peers. The data sets include the service baseline, financial efficiency, service effectiveness, cost effectiveness, and amount and use of service. Data in the trend analysis compares data from the 2003 and 2009 National Transit Database reports. Table C-7 lists the comparison data for Metro Ride compared to the average of its Wisconsin and national peers.

Table C-7: 2003 and 2009 Comparison Data

Statistic	Metro Ride		Averages			
			Wisconsin Peers		National Peers	
	2003	2009	2003	2009	2003	2009
Service Baseline						
Ridership	725,188	794,121	748,683	761,981	969,849	1,166,684
Farebox Revenue	$328,864	$436,701	$309,760	$459,199	$496,182	$778,039
Operating Expense	$2,432,306	$3,078,200	$2,326,656	$2,919,140	$2,541,804	$3,526,099
Revenue Hours	37,946	38,738	39,076	38,803	46,611	47,879
Revenue Miles	556,501	540,514	575,836	554,892	625,275	649,978
Peak Vehicles	20	21	14	13	19	20
Service Area Population	45,513	45,513	59,122	62,304	83,348	84,617
Financial Efficiency						
Cost per Revenue Mile	$4.37	$5.69	$4.14	$5.31	$4.11	$5.57
Cost per Revenue Hour	$64.10	$79.46	$62.20	$77.45	$56.77	$77.72
Cost per Peak Vehicle	$121,615	$146,581	$168,684	$226,300	$142,035	$189,940
Service Effectiveness						
Passengers per Revenue Mile	1.30	1.47	1.25	1.31	1.47	1.63
Passengers per Revenue Hour	19.11	20.50	18.65	18.82	19.59	21.96
Passengers per Peak Vehicle	36259	37815	52982	57872	49602	54831
Cost Effectiveness						
Cost per Passenger Trip	$3.35	$3.88	$3.46	$4.31	$3.06	$3.90
Farebox Recovery	13.52%	14.19%	13.27%	15.39%	18.13%	19.41%
Revenue per Passenger Trip	$0.45	$0.55	$0.41	$0.60	$0.51	$0.67
Amount and Use of Service						
Revenue Miles per Capita	12.23	11.88	9.54	8.86	7.68	7.88
Revenue Hours per Capita	0.83	0.85	0.64	0.61	0.58	0.59
Peak Vehicles per 10,000 People	4.39	4.61	2.32	2.10	2.30	2.36

The trend analysis indicators are presented in Table C-8, shown as a total percentage change over the course of the 5-year period and an annual average change derived from the total.

Table C-8: 2003-2009 Trend Analysis

Statistic	Percentage Change (2003-2009)					
	Metro Ride		Wisconsin Peers		National Peers	
	Total	Annual	Total	Annual	Total	Annual
Service Baseline						
Ridership	9.5%	1.9%	1.8%	0.4%	20.3%	4.1%
Farebox Revenue	32.8%	6.6%	48.2%	9.6%	56.8%	11.4%
Operating Expense	26.6%	5.3%	25.5%	5.1%	38.7%	7.7%
Revenue Hours	2.1%	0.4%	-0.7%	-0.1%	2.7%	0.5%
Revenue Miles	-2.9%	-0.6%	-3.6%	-0.7%	4.0%	0.8%
Peak Vehicles	5.0%	1.0%	-5.9%	-1.2%	3.8%	0.8%
Service Area Population	0.0%	0.0%	5.4%	1.1%	1.5%	0.3%
Financial Efficiency						
Cost per Revenue Mile	30.3%	6.1%	28.2%	5.6%	35.4%	7.1%
Cost per Revenue Hour	24.0%	4.8%	24.5%	4.9%	36.9%	7.4%
Cost per Peak Vehicle	20.5%	4.1%	34.2%	6.8%	33.7%	6.7%
Service Effectiveness						
Passengers per Revenue Mile	12.7%	2.5%	5.0%	1.0%	10.8%	2.2%
Passengers per Revenue Hour	7.3%	1.5%	0.9%	0.2%	12.1%	2.4%
Passengers per Peak Vehicle	4.3%	0.9%	9.2%	1.8%	10.5%	2.1%
Cost Effectiveness						
Cost per Passenger Trip	15.6%	3.1%	24.4%	4.9%	27.5%	5.5%
Farebox Recovery	4.9%	1.0%	16.0%	3.2%	7.1%	1.4%
Revenue per Passenger Trip	21.3%	4.3%	45.7%	9.1%	30.4%	6.1%
Amount and Use of Service						
Revenue Miles per Capita	-2.9%	-0.6%	-7.2%	-1.4%	2.7%	0.5%
Revenue Hours per Capita	2.1%	0.4%	-4.7%	-0.9%	2.3%	0.5%
Peak Vehicles per 10,000 People	5.0%	1.0%	-9.3%	-1.9%	2.5%	0.5%

Service Baseline

The service baseline includes the basic data upon which the groups were selected and measured, using ratios derived from the information. A number of trends are immediately evident in the baseline data set:

- Metro Ride ridership increased by 9.5 percent over the period, while ridership grew by only 1.8 percent for the Wisconsin peer group. Ridership grew by 20.3 percent for the national peers. Metro Ride increased fares during the period (in 2008), but ridership did not suffer as a result. Many riders transferred from cash fares to discounted multi-ride media and continued to ride. On the same topic, farebox revenues increased by 32.8 percent at Metro Ride during the period due to both the increased ridership and the increased fare. However, this large increase in farebox revenue was 15% lower than the Wisconsin peers and 25% lower than the national peer average.

- Metro Ride operating expenses increased over the period at nearly the same rate as the Wisconsin peers (approximately 5 percent per year), but at a lower rate than the national peers (approximately 8 percent per year).
- Metro Ride did not expand between 2003 and 2009 and in fact shrunk slightly, while the Wisconsin peer groups decreased service and the national peers increased service slightly.
- Finally, the Metro Ride service area population did not change in the period, indicating little or no expansion, while the peer groups service areas grew slightly.

Taken as a whole, that Metro Ride has had a pretty stable and successful period. It is clear from the fare increase without loss of ridership that Metro Ride has a dedicated base of riders. Metro Ride fared better than their Wisconsin peers, but fared less well compared to their national peers.

Financial Efficiency

Metro Ride unit costs rose slightly faster than those of its Wisconsin peers, but slower than those of the national peer group. The cost per mile of service rose by 30.3 percent and cost per hour of service rose by 24 percent, almost identical to the Wisconsin peer group, while nationally the average increase for the group was 35.4 percent for the cost per mile and 36.9 percent for the cost per hour.

Service Effectiveness

The service effectiveness indicators refer to the amount of passengers per unit of service provided. During the period, Metro Ride and both peer groups realized increases in service effectiveness across the board, a result of increased ridership and only small changes in amount of service provided. Metro Ride saw an increase in passengers per revenue mile higher than both of peer groups (12.7 percent).

Cost Effectiveness

Metro Ride had an increase of 15.6 percent in cost per passenger trip, but this was better than the 24.4 and 27.5 percent increases realized by the Wisconsin and national peer groups respectively during the period. Rising fuel costs, wages, vehicle insurance rates, and general cost increase for services and parts were just a few of the inflationary items that the entire transit industry experienced during the period.

The ridership growth and fare increase resulted in an increase of 32.8 percent in total fare revenues, but the increase of 26.6 percent in operating costs held the increase in farebox recovery to 4.9 percent during the five year period. This increase was comparable to the 7.1

percent increase in farebox recovery by the national peer group, but the Wisconsin peer group had a much higher increase in farebox recovery during the period of 16 percent. Revenue per passenger trip was greatly increased across the board with Metro Ride having an increase of 21.3 percent and national peers 30.4 percent. The highest in the group, the Wisconsin peers increased revenue per passenger trip by 45.7 percent, due to the 48.2 percent increase in farebox revenue coupled with the modest change in ridership (1.8 percent).

Overall, Metro Ride did a great job balancing rising costs and the need to generate additional farebox revenues during the period while also increasing ridership. The poor state of the economy, rising transportation costs, and the increasing dependence on alternative modes of transportation all contributed to the success of the period.

Amount and Use of Service

For Metro Ride, the amount of service remained about the same over the period from 2003 to 2009, with miles per capita decreasing by 2.9 percent while hours per capita increased by 2.1 percent, effectively indicating that the system that made very few changes in its services, and clearly no expansions. Tight budgets at all levels of government affected not only Metro Ride but its national and Wisconsin peers. Metro Ride fared about the same as the national peers, with service levels per capita only increasing slightly, but fared much better than the Wisconsin peers, which as a group decreased miles per capita by 7.2 percent and hours per capita by 4.7 percent.

Conclusion

The past five years have clearly been difficult ones for the transit industry in general, but Metro Ride performed fairly well over the period. The amount of service provided remained about the same at Metro Ride and both peer groups during the period. Metro Ride ridership increased by 9.5 percent, which is much higher than the 1.8 percent increase realized by Wisconsin peers, but much lower than the 20.3 percent increase in ridership by the national peer group. Farebox revenue increased significantly across the board, but at a slower rate for Metro Ride. For Metro Ride, service effectiveness, cost effectiveness, and amount and use of service all improved over the period, with the exception of revenue miles per capita, which decreased by 2.9 percent. However, Metro Ride was less financially efficient over the period, but reduced financial efficiency at a rate the same or better than the peer averages. The most remarkable observation during the period was the fact that Metro Ride increased fares, but continued to keep ridership stable and even increase it some. This fact shows how important Metro Ride service is in the community for providing mobility options for different types of people and trip purposes.

Appendix D Public Outreach

Introduction

The study to determine the most effective ways to improve Metro Ride transportation services in the City of Wausau and the surrounding region includes an extensive community participation program designed to elicit input from current and potential passengers, the general public as well as community leaders and key policy decision makers. The community participation program includes three separate components, including an opinion survey of current Metro Ride riders, interviews with community leaders and stakeholders as well as public drop-in sessions at the downtown Transit Center. This technical memorandum presents the results of the opinion survey as well as summaries of stakeholder workshops and rider and Metro Ride employee/driver drop-in sessions conducted as part of the outreach process.

Survey Description

A survey of Metro Ride fixed route riders was undertaken on April 15, 2011. The opinion surveys were distributed during the first 7 hours, 20 minutes on all Metro Ride weekday fixed routes (*not* on Express Routes). A key dimension of the survey was the use of survey workers to issue and collect survey cards from patrons. Survey workers were instructed to issue a survey card to all boarding passengers.

The data collection effort was intended to serve two purposes. First, while survey workers were aboard Metro Ride buses distributing survey cards, they recorded passenger boarding and alighting activity by stop location (April 14 -16). This information has been processed in terms of boarding and alighting activity by bus route and by bus stop for both inbound and outbound directions. Tables and graphic displays of this information will be used in developing service improvement recommendations and will also be submitted to Metro Ride for their continuing use, and will be presented in a later chapter of this report.

The second component of this effort was the survey questionnaire that gave riders an opportunity to provide input on Metro Ride services and ideas for service change proposals. This chapter describes the conduct, content, and results of the survey. Where possible, comparisons between the results of the survey conducted as part of the 2005 TDP and the 2011 survey are discussed.

Survey Method - Due to the participation of the survey workers, a major effort was undertaken before the survey to assure a complete understanding of the survey procedures. Survey workers were required to attend a training session at which the survey procedures were explained in detail. On each day of the survey, survey workers were issued a survey kit that

included a supply of survey cards and pencils. The survey materials were placed in an envelope that also contained survey instructions.

Survey cards were issued to riders on both the inbound and the outbound direction. Riders were provided the option to complete the survey card while on the bus or to take the card with them to complete it later. If the rider did not complete the survey while on the trip they were issued the card, they could return it to any other survey worker or a bus driver on a subsequent trip. Completing the survey while on the bus was facilitated by providing pencils to riders and printing the survey forms on hard card stock paper. Riders were also instructed to complete only one survey throughout the survey period.

Survey Questions - The survey card, which is presented in Figure D-1, consisted of 20 questions. With the exception of one open-ended question, riders were only required to check off a box to answer most questions. The first group of questions concerned the riders' riding habits. This included questions related to what bus route they were on when they received the survey, how bus stops were accessed, length of time riding, trip purpose, frequency of riding, and payment method. The next group of questions requested attitudinal information regarding their view of the existing bus service and potential improvements. The final group of questions focused on socioeconomic characteristics of the respondent. These questions asked for information pertaining to key factors influencing travel habits including age, automobile ownership, automobile availability and family income. The final two questions requested the home town of the rider and the preferred method to reduce operating costs if the need arises.

Survey Response - During the one-day weekday opinion survey period, about 1,350 forms were issued and 454 valid surveys were returned, processed and summarized. This is a response rate of about 33.6 percent, which is high for this type of survey. Typically, response rates between 20 and 25 percent are attained.

Figure D-1: 2011 Rider Survey Instrument

WAUSAU AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM (Metro Ride) - RIDER SURVEY - 2011

Dear Customers: We'd like to learn more about you and your travel needs to help Metro Ride plan its future services. Please read each question and mark the most appropriate answer. Please mark only one response to each question and please complete only one survey form during this survey week. After you finish answering all questions, please return the completed survey form to the survey worker or to the bus driver on your next trip.

1. **On what bus route did you receive this survey?** Route #_____

2. **How did you get to this bus**? ☐ Another Bus (Route # _____)
☐ Walked (How many blocks? ___) ☐ Automobile ☐ Other

3. **How will you complete your trip**? ☐ Another Bus (Route #____)
☐ Walked (How many blocks? ___) ☐ Automobile ☐ Other

4. **How long have you been riding Metro Ride**?
☐ Less than a year ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 3-4 years ☐ 5+ years

5. **What is the purpose of <u>this trip</u> today**? ☐ School ☐ Work
☐ Shopping ☐ Medical/Dental ☐ Social/Recreation ☐ Other

6. **How many days do you usually use the bus?** ☐ Less than once a week ☐ 1-2 days/week ☐ 3- 5 days/week ☐ 6 days a week

7. **Compared to last year, I am riding** ☐ More ☐ Less ☐ Same

8. **What fare did you pay for this trip**? ☐ Adult cash ☐ Adult token
☐ Adult monthly pass ☐ Transfer ☐ Student cash
☐ Student ticket ☐ Student monthly pass
☐ Elderly & Disabled cash ☐ Elderly & Disabled monthly pass

9. **How do you rate bus service for each of the following?**

	EXCELLENT	*VERY GOOD*	*GOOD*	*FAIR*	*POOR*
Interior Cleanliness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Buses are On-Time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Service Frequency	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Places Served	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. **How would you like to get information and notifications about changes or delays for Metro Ride? (check only your preference)** ☐ Radio ☐ Local Television ☐ System Website
☐ Twitter ☐ Facebook ☐ Other:_____

11. **What do you think would be the most important improvement we could make to Metro Ride service?**
☐ Provide more frequent service ☐ Provide evening service ☐ Add Saturday service in summer ☐ Restore service around Weston ☐ Start service to the stores in Rib Mountain
☐ Other: _____

12. **Could you have made this trip if bus service was not available**? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Yes, but with inconvenience

13. **Do you have a valid driver's license**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

14. **Was a car available for this trip**? ☐ Yes ☐ No

15. **How many vehicles does your household own or lease**?
☐ None ☐ One ☐ Two ☐ Three or more

16. **Your sex**: ☐ Male ☐ Female

17. **Your age**: ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-29 ☐ 30-44 ☐ 45-64 ☐ 65+

18. **What is your approximate total annual family income**?
☐ Under $10,000 ☐ $10,000-$19,999 ☐ $20,000-$29,999
☐ $30,000-$44,999 ☐ More than $45,000

19. **In which community do you live?** ☐ Wausau ☐ Schofield
☐ Rothschild ☐ Weston ☐ Stettin ☐ Other (_____)

20. **If we had to cut some service due to financial constraints, which <u>ONE</u> of these changes would you prefer we do?** ☐ Reduce frequency at all times on all routes to 60 minutes ☐ Raise fares ☐ Stop running buses on Saturdays ☐ Stop service at 5:30 PM ☐ Other: _____

After completing this card, return it to the survey worker or return it to the driver on your next bus trip. Thank you for your help.

Survey Results

After the completion of the survey, responses from the 454 completed surveys were tabulated. Results from each of the survey questions are presented in this section of the report. The key findings for each question are identified and discussed.

Bus Route and Survey Response

Riders were asked to identify the route on which they received the survey. As seen in Table D-1, the survey responses were fairly evenly distributed between the weekday routes, with Route D providing the largest percentage of survey responses (17.4 percent). Routes K, A, and J also provided higher percentages of responses. The portion of each routes daily ridership to the total daily ridership of all routes was reviewed. The total daily ridership includes all nine of the regular routes (Table D-2).

Table D-1: Route Where Received Survey

On which bus route did you receive this survey?	# Responses	Percent of Total
A	74	16.3%
B	48	10.6%
C	42	9.3%
D	79	17.4%
G	15	3.3%
H	7	1.5%
I	51	11.2%
J	62	13.7%
K	76	16.7%
No Response	0	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Response rates from various routes were generally close to the percentage of ridership on each of the fixed routes, except for Routes G, H, and K. From previous experience with onboard surveys, response rates on a given route are sometimes dependent on the personality, disposition, or tenacity of an individual surveyor. It appears that was the case for some of the routes in this survey. However, the overall response rate is excellent for this survey and the response rates from any given route do not detract from the overall success of the survey.

Table D-2: Daily Ridership by Route

Route	Daily Ridership	Percent of Total
A	714	15.5%
B	764	16.5%
C	456	9.9%
D	574	12.4%
G	520	11.3%
H	462	10.0%
I	448	9.7%
J	486	10.5%
K	194	4.2%
Total	4618	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Ridecheck

In 2005, the largest percentages of responses came from Routes A, D, G and H.

Mode of Accessing Bus

Riders were asked to identify how they got to the bus they were riding. They were given several choices from which to select their response. Overall responses are presented in Table D-3 below. Nearly three quarters of riders walked to reach the bus on which they were riding at the time they received the survey. Another 21 percent transferred from another bus route. Less than 2 percent of riders used an automobile to access the bus. The following tables break down the groups of riders who walk or transfer from another bus route to access the bus.

Table D-3: Mode of Accessing Bus

How did you get to this bus?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Another Bus	92	20.3%	21.0%
Walked	323	71.1%	73.7%
Automobile	8	1.8%	1.8%
Other	15	3.3%	3.4%
No Response	16	3.5%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

One possible response was “walked”, which if selected, the rider was asked to list number of blocks they had to walk (73.7 percent of riders said they walked to access the bus). Of the riders who listed the number of blocks they walk to access the bus, most riders (49.6 percent) walked only one block. Twenty-five percent of riders who listed the number of blocks they walk to

access the bus said they walked 2 blocks, 13 percent said they walked 3 blocks, and 12.6 percent walked four or more blocks. The relatively short walking distances by riders to access the bus indicates extensive coverage of the bus routes throughout the City.

Table D-4: Number of Blocks Walked to Reach Bus

How many blocks did you walk to reach this bus?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
1	130	28.6%	49.6%
2	65	14.3%	24.8%
3	34	7.5%	13.0%
4 or more	33	7.3%	12.6%
No Response	192	42.3%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

A total of 21 percent of riders indicated that they accessed the bus they were on by transferring from another Metro Ride bus. Those riders who transferred from another Metro Ride bus were asked to identify the route from which they transferred. Table D-5 provides the results and indicates the number of people and the percent of total transfers. Of the riders who indicated that they transferred from another bus route, one third came from Route C, 20 percent came from Route J, and 10 percent came from Route B. Transfers from other routes were distributed somewhat evenly.

Table D-5: Route Transferred From to Reach Bus

From which bus route did you transfer?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
A	4	0.9%	5.7%
B	7	1.5%	10.0%
C	23	5.1%	32.9%
D	5	1.1%	7.1%
G	3	0.7%	4.3%
H	3	0.7%	4.3%
I	4	0.9%	5.7%
J	14	3.1%	20.0%
K	4	0.9%	5.7%
X4	1	0.2%	1.4%
X9	2	0.4%	2.9%
No Response	384	84.6%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

From the 2005 survey, the response was similar: 70.5 percent of riders walked to access the bus and 22.8 percent transferred from another bus. Also similarly, riders had short walking distance (63.1 percent walked one block or less).

Mode to Complete Trip

Riders were asked to identify how they would complete their trip after leaving the bus. They were given several choices from which to select their response. In contrast to accessing the bus, more riders transferred to another bus after leaving the bus on which they received the survey than walked. From the survey response, 67.1 percent of riders transferred to another bus after leaving the bus where they received the survey and 25.7 percent walked to their destination. Again, less than 2 percent of riders used an automobile to complete their trip.

Table D-6: Mode to Complete Trip

How will you complete your trip?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Another Bus	282	62.1%	67.1%
Walk	108	23.8%	25.7%
Automobile	8	1.8%	1.9%
Other	22	4.8%	5.2%
No Response	34	7.5%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

As in the above question, one possible response was “walk”, which if selected, the rider was asked to list number of blocks. A total of 25.7 percent of riders who listed the mode to complete the trip walked to their destination. Responses are presented in Table D-7. Most riders who walked to their destination (46 percent) walked only one block. Twenty-six percent walked two blocks, but another 16.1 percent walked four or more blocks to their destination. Again, the relatively small walking distances is indicative of excellent service coverage throughout the City.

Table D-7: Number of Blocks Walked to Complete Trip

How many blocks will you walk to complete your trip?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
1	40	8.8%	46.0%
2	23	5.1%	26.4%
3	10	2.2%	11.5%
4 or more	14	3.1%	16.1%
No Response	367	80.8%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Also similar to the previous question, riders were also asked to which bus route they transferred after riding on the route on which they received the survey. Again, 67.1 percent of riders who answered the mode to complete the trip question transferred to another bus to complete their trip. Results are shown in Table D-8. The highest percentage of riders who indicated that they transferred to another bus after leaving the bus on which they received the survey transferred to Route B, D, C, and Express Route X4. Transfers to other routes were generally evenly divided among the other routes.

Table D-8: Bus Route Transferred To

To which bus route will you transfer next?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
A	13	2.9%	6.6%
B	34	7.5%	17.3%
C	22	4.8%	11.2%
D	32	7.0%	16.3%
G	13	2.9%	6.6%
H	11	2.4%	5.6%
I	14	3.1%	7.1%
J	16	3.5%	8.2%
K	13	2.9%	6.6%
X4	19	4.2%	9.7%
X7	8	1.8%	4.1%
X9	1	0.2%	0.5%
No Response	258	56.8%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

From the 2005 survey, 60.6 percent of riders transferred to another bus after leaving the bus where they received the survey and 33 percent walked to their destination. Forty-nine percent of riders walked one block or less to their final destination. For the transfer to other routes, the most popular routes were G, X4, A, and D.

Length of Time Riding Metro Ride

The next question asked how long the passenger has been riding Metro Ride buses. Table D-9 shows that about 46 percent of riders have been riding for *five years or more*. This is a large number of long-term riders. Surveys performed by the consultant at other systems generally indicated that less than one third of the riders had been riding for that extended length of time. Another 23.1 percent of riders have been riding Metro Ride buses for 3 to 4 years. However, even with the large number of long time users, there are a significant number of riders (13.3 percent) that have been riding for *less than a year*. This indicates that transit ridership in the City of Wausau experiences significant turnover, that is, each year some people stop riding while others become new riders. This emphasizes the need to continually provide public information on transit services and perform marketing activities to attract new riders.

Table D-9: Length of Time Riding Metro Ride

How long have you been riding Metro Ride?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Less than a year	60	13.2%	13.3%
1 to 2 years	81	17.8%	18.0%
3 to 4 years	104	22.9%	23.1%
5 or more years	206	45.4%	45.7%
No Response	3	0.7%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

From the 2005 survey, the number of riders riding Metro Ride for 5 or more years has increased from 41.8 percent. The number of new riders riding less than 1 year has decreased from 19.6 percent. For the middle number of years, the riders using the service for 3 to 4 years has increased from 19 percent and the number of riders riding 1 to 2 years has decreased from 19.6 percent.

Trip Purpose

Riders were asked to identify the purpose of the trip they were making that day. Table D-10 shows that *school* is the most common trip purpose on the Metro Ride system and comprises 27.4 percent of the weekday riders. In a very close second, though, *work* represents 26.3 percent of the trips. *Shopping* (18 percent) is the third most common weekday trip purpose.

Table D-10: Trip Purpose

What is the purpose of this trip today	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
School	123	27.1%	27.4%
Work	118	26.0%	26.3%
Shopping	81	17.8%	18.0%
Medical/Dental	35	7.7%	7.8%
Social/Recreation	33	7.3%	7.3%
Other	59	13.0%	13.1%
No Response	5	1.1%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

From the 2005 survey, the percentage of school trips and work trips have decreased slightly from 30.7 percent and 27.8 percent, respectively, but the number of shopping trips has increased substantially from 10.2 percent. Medical/dental and social/recreation trips have also increased in percentage since 2005.

Frequency of Use

The next question asked how many trips the passenger makes on Metro Ride services in a week. Table D-11 shows that on weekdays 58.6 percent ride Metro Ride buses *3 to 5 days per week*. An additional 30.6 percent ride *6 days per week* for a total of 89.3 percent of riders who could be considered frequent riders. This is consistent with the fact that about 54 percent of riders indicated in the previous question that their trip is work or school. Those traveling to and from work or school tend to make roundtrips on several days throughout the week. Only 10.7 percent are infrequent riders, or those who ride *two or fewer days per week*. Again, these findings are consistent with the number of riders indicating trip purposes other than work or school. Riders traveling for purposes other than school or work tend to travel on fewer days throughout the week.

Table D-11: Frequency of Use

How many days do you usually use the bus?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Less than once a week	15	3.3%	3.4%
1 to 2 days per week	33	7.3%	7.4%
3 to 5 days per week	262	57.7%	58.6%
6 days a week	137	30.2%	30.6%
No Response	7	1.5%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

The 2005 survey asked riders how many one-way trips they make in a week on the Metro Ride system. The frequency of use appears to have increased since 2005. From the survey results in 2005, 52.7 percent of responses indicated that they were frequent riders and 14.1 percent infrequent. Though not comparing exact units of measure, using two trip per normal day assumptions, Metro Ride riders are using the service more frequently in 2011 than in 2005.

Riding Trend

Riders were asked how the frequency at which they are currently riding Metro Ride compares with the previous year. Table D-12 shows that 48.1 percent of weekday users are riding *more* now than last year, while only 5.1 percent weekday said *less*. The remainder, 46.7 percent, indicated that they are riding *about the same*.

Table D-12: Riding Trend

Compared to last year, I am riding	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
More	206	45.4%	48.1%
Less	22	4.8%	5.1%
Same	200	44.1%	46.7%
No Response	26	5.7%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Compared to the results from the 2005 survey, more people said they were riding more than the previous year in 2005 (51.4 percent), but far less people said they were riding at about the same frequency (36.7 percent) or less frequently (11.9 percent) in 2005. Thus, it seems that in 2011, people's riding habits are more stable than in 2005.

Fare Payment Options

The next question on the survey asked the riders how they paid for the bus trip they were currently making. As seen in Table D-13, the most frequently cited fare payment method for weekday riders was the Adult monthly pass (29.2 percent), which was followed by Elderly and Disabled pass (15.8 percent), Adult cash (13.6 percent), and Student monthly pass (12.9 percent).

Table D-13: Fare Payment

What fare did you pay for this trip?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Adult cash	61	13.4%	13.6%
Adult token	35	7.7%	7.8%
Adult monthly pass	131	28.9%	29.2%
Transfer	9	2.0%	2.0%
Student cash	8	1.8%	1.8%
Student ticket	41	9.0%	9.2%
Student monthly pass	58	12.8%	12.9%
Elderly & Disabled cash	34	7.5%	7.6%
Elderly & Disabled pass	71	15.6%	15.8%
No Response	6	1.3%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

During the period between the previous study and this survey, fares were increased in 2008. Looking at the trend between the two surveys, it looks like the percentage of adults using cash to pay their fares dropped by 3.2 percent while the percentage of riders using adult monthly passes increased by 7.6 percent. The percentage of riders using student monthly passes increased by 2 percent while cash and ticket-paying students decreased by 2.7 and 5.7 percent. Elderly and disabled riders paying cash and using passes increased by 2.3 and 1.3 percent, respectively. From the survey and other information collected as part of this study, it seems that after the fare increase, many riders changed fare payment media and kept riding the bus.

Service Evaluation

The next questions asked riders to rate the performance of Metro Ride in four different categories. For this type of survey, a response is considered favorable if the combined total of responses in the *excellent, very good* or *good* categories is greater than or equal to 90 percent of all responses.

The results show that three of the four categories attain this threshold for a favorable rating. *Places served* receives the lowest total score in the *excellent, very good* and *good* categories of 89.3 percent. The next lowest score for these three ratings was *interior cleanliness* with a rating of 91.9 percent, which is still excellent. The best score was 95.8 percent for *service frequency*.

Interior Cleanliness

When asked to rate interior cleanliness of the bus, the average rating was 4.03 out of 5. Nearly 43 percent of riders rated the interior cleanliness of the bus as *excellent*. Another 49.2 percent rated bus interior cleanliness as either *very good* or *good*. Less than 2 percent of responses indicated that the cleanliness of the bus was *poor*.

Table D-14: Rating of Interior Cleanliness

How do you rate Interior Cleanliness	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Excellent	191	42.1%	42.7%
Very Good	121	26.7%	27.1%
Good	99	21.8%	22.1%
Fair	29	6.4%	6.5%
Poor	7	1.5%	1.6%
No Response	7	1.5%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

On-Time Performance

Riders also rate on-time performance of Metro Ride service highly. Forty-eight percent of riders said on-time performance was *excellent*. Another 46.8 percent of riders indicated that on-time performance is either *very good* or *good*. Less than 1 percent of riders said that on-time performance of the service is *poor*.

Table D-15: Rating of On-Time Performance

How do you rate Buses are On-Time	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Excellent	211	46.5%	48.4%
Very Good	139	30.6%	31.9%
Good	65	14.3%	14.9%
Fair	19	4.2%	4.4%
Poor	2	0.4%	0.5%
No Response	18	4.0%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Service Frequency

Service frequency received the highest percentage of *excellent* ratings of the four categories on which riders were asked to rate Metro Ride service. Nearly 49 percent of Metro Ride riders said that service frequency is *excellent*. Another 46.8 percent of riders rated service frequency as *very good* or *good*. Less than 1 percent of respondents said that the frequency of the Metro Ride service is *poor*.

Table D-16: Rating of Service Frequency

How do you rate Service Frequency	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Excellent	208	45.8%	48.9%
Very Good	126	27.8%	29.6%
Good	73	16.1%	17.2%
Fair	16	3.5%	3.8%
Poor	2	0.4%	0.5%
No Response	29	6.4%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Places Served

Of the four rating categories, that places that are served by Metro Ride received the lowest percentage of *excellent* ratings (45.7 percent). Nonetheless, the ratings of places served by Metro Ride are very high. Another 43.6 percent of riders rated *places served* as *very good* or *good*. About 2 percent of riders rated the places served by Metro Ride as poor.

Table D-17: Rating of Places Served

How do you rate Places Served	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Excellent	193	42.5%	45.7%
Very Good	115	25.3%	27.3%
Good	69	15.2%	16.4%
Fair	36	7.9%	8.5%
Poor	9	2.0%	2.1%
No Response	32	7.0%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Compared to the 2005 survey results, the favorable rating of the combined *excellent*, *very good* and *good* scores improved for *places served* by 6.1 percent, which may reflect the new circulator service in Weston (to be discontinued at the end of 2011). Favorable ratings of interior cleanliness, on-time performance, and service frequency all improved by at least 2

percent. Overall, the view of Metro Ride in the eyes of its riders has improved in the past 5 years.

Best Place for Metro Ride Information

To assist Metro Ride in their efforts to market new or existing services, the survey asked riders to indicate the best way for Metro Ride to reach them with information. The riders were given several options to choose from and were asked to identify only one source. Table D-18 provides the results.

Most Metro Ride riders would like to get information on changes or delays to MetroRide services via local television (38 percent). Another 30.6 percent said they would prefer to receive information on the radio. Some riders said the more technological options of the system website (11.3 percent) or Facebook (11.1 percent) would be the best place to receive Metro Ride information.

Table D-18: Best Place for Metro Ride Information

How would you like to get information about changes or delays for Metro Ride?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Radio	133	29.3%	30.6%
Local Television	165	36.3%	38.0%
System Website	49	10.8%	11.3%
Twitter	1	0.2%	0.2%
Facebook	48	10.6%	11.1%
Other	38	8.4%	8.8%
No Response	20	4.4%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

The question about receiving information on Metro Ride has been modified since 2005 to include the newer technology of Twitter and Facebook. However, it appears that Metro Ride riders are unlikely to use Twitter. In 2005, 20.2 percent of riders said they'd like to receive information from Metro Ride via local television. That percentage has increased by 17.8 percent since 2005. Also, the percentage of riders who would like to receive information via the radio has increased by 15.8 percent from 14.8 percent in 2005 to 30.6 percent in 2011. The percentage of people wanting information via the system website has increased by only 3 percent since 2005, but as noted, other computer-based options were added, so the additional 11.1 percent of riders wanting to receive information via Facebook should be added to this percentage.

Most Important Service Improvement

The next question asked Metro Ride riders the single most important improvement that they would like to see Metro Ride accomplish. A list of options was provided. At least one fifth of riders think that the following four improvements would be most important to the service in order of preference: restore Weston service, which will be dropped at the end of 2011 (22.2 percent), add Saturday service during the summer (21.8 percent), provide evening service (21.3 percent), and start Rib Mountain service (20.6 percent). The provision of more frequent service was considered to be the least important improvement to be made by the riders (12.5 percent).

Table D-19: Most Important Service Improvement

What do you think would be the most important improvement we could make?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Provide more frequent service	55	12.1%	12.5%
Provide evening service	94	20.7%	21.3%
Add Sat summer service	96	21.1%	21.8%
Restore Weston service	98	21.6%	22.2%
Start Rib Mountain service	91	20.0%	20.6%
Other	7	1.5%	1.6%
No Response	13	2.9%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

In 2005, the question relating to improvements to Metro Ride service was open-ended and therefore no direct comparison is possible. However, the most important improvements as listed by open-ended responses in order of frequency of mention were: evening service, more weekend service, service to Cedar Creek, Rib Mountain, and Wal-Mart, cleaner buses, and year-round weekend service.

Extent of Transit Dependency

The next series of questions related to the dependency of Metro Ride riders on transit service. This series of questions helps to determine the level at which Metro Ride ridership base is made up of discretionary (i.e., choice riders) or non-discretionary (i.e., captive) riders. A ridership base that is heavily transit dependent indicates that only certain population groups are using the service rather than a cross-section of the population in the service area.

Ability to Complete Trip without Bus

The first of these questions asked riders to indicate whether or not they could have made their trip if transit services were not available. Table D-20 shows that only 11.2 percent of riders indicated that they could have made the trip without Metro Ride. A total of 56.5 percent of the weekday riders stated that they could not have made the trip without Metro Ride. The remaining 32.3 percent that they could have made the trip without Metro Ride service, but it would be inconvenient.

The group that said they could not make the trip without Metro Ride and part of the middle group can be considered dependent or "captive" users. The results indicate that a high percentage of riders using Metro Ride are "captive" riders.

Table D-20: Ability to Complete Trip without Bus

Could you have made this trip if bus service were not available?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Yes	49	10.8%	11.2%
No	247	54.4%	56.5%
Yes, but inconvenient	141	31.1%	32.3%
No Response	17	3.7%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Riders in 2011 are more dependent upon the Metro Ride service than riders in 2005. In 2005, 16.4 percent of riders said they could make the trip without bus service. That number was down to only 11.2 percent (a 5.2% decrease) in 2011. Further, in 2005, 50.3 percent of riders said they could not make the trip without Metro Ride, but in 2011 that number is 56.5 percent, a 6.2 percent increase. The percentage of riders who could make the trip but it would be convenient is almost exactly the same between 2005 and 2011.

Possession of Driver's License

The next question designed to further gauge the level of transit dependency among Metro Ride riders asked whether or not the rider has a valid driver's license. Table D-21 shows that 75.4 percent of Metro Ride riders do not have a valid driver's license. This is consistent with the high percentage of "captive" riders noted in the above question.

Table D-21: Possession of Driver's License

Do you have a valid driver's license?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Yes	109	24.0%	24.6%
No	334	73.6%	75.4%
No Response	11	2.4%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

As compared to the 2005 survey, far fewer Metro Ride riders have a driver's license in 2011. In 2005, 66.7 percent of riders said they did not have a license. In 2011, 75.4 percent do not, an increase of 8.7 percent of riders without licenses.

Availability of Vehicle for Trip

Riders were then asked if a car was available to them to make their trip. Table D-22 shows that 85.7 percent of Metro Ride users did not have a car available to them to make their current trip. This confirms the response to the question which asked the riders if they could have made their trip without Metro Ride service to which 56.5 percent of riders stated that they *could not have made the current trip at all*.

Table D-22: Availability of Vehicle for Trip

Was a car available for this trip?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Yes	63	13.9%	14.3%
No	379	83.5%	85.7%
No Response	12	2.6%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

As was obvious in the results to the previous two questions, Metro Ride riders are more dependent upon the bus service in 2011 than they were in 2005. The same is true for in the vehicles available for trips. In 2005, 81.3 percent of riders did not have a vehicle available for the current bus trip. In 2011, 85.7 percent do not, an increase of 4.4 percent.

Vehicle Ownership

The final question in the transit dependency area requested information regarding the number of automobiles owned or leased by the rider's household. As seen in Table D-23, 77.7 percent of the weekday user's households have no more than one car. This is another indicator of the high level of transit dependency of Metro Ride riders. In fact, 56.1 percent of riders own no vehicles in their households.

Table D-23: Vehicle Ownership

How many vehicles does your household own or lease?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
None	249	54.8%	56.1%
One	96	21.1%	21.6%
Two	72	15.9%	16.2%
Three or more	27	5.9%	6.1%
No Response	10	2.2%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

As compared to the 2005 survey, riders in 2011 own fewer automobiles. In 2005, 65.9 percent of riders' households had one or fewer vehicles. In 2011, that number has increased by 11.8 percent to 77.7 percent of households with one or fewer vehicles. As with all the other questions on transit dependency, the responses to this question also confirm that the 2011 Metro Ride rider is more dependent on the service than the 2005 rider.

Socioeconomic/Demographic Measures

The next series of questions concerns the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the rider. This information allows for comparisons with the Metro Ride ridership base to the population of City of Wausau as a whole from the 2010 US Census or the 2009 American Community Survey (from the US Census Bureau), depending on the type of information. For 2010, the US Census Bureau estimates the population of the City of Wausau at 39,106.

Gender

The first of these questions asked the rider to identify their sex. According to the survey results, 57 percent of Metro Ride users are *female* and 43 percent are *male*. A decisive female majority is typical of the makeup of the ridership base at transit systems. From the 2009 American Community Survey, females make up a larger percentage of the population than males in the City of Wausau (51.1 percent), but the Metro Ride ridership still has a larger percentage of female riders than the general population of the City.

Table D-24: Gender Distribution of Ridership

Your sex is:	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Male	189	41.6%	43.0%
Female	251	55.3%	57.0%
No Response	14	3.1%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

However, the balance between female and male riders has equalized some since 2005. In 2005, 65.7 percent of riders were female where 57 percent are female in 2011, a decrease of 8.7 percent.

Age

The next question asked the rider to identify the age group in which they belong. Table D-25 provides the age breakdown of Metro Ride riders compared to the 2009 American Community Survey from the US Census Bureau for Wausau residents. The highest single age group among Metro Ride riders is the population aged *45 to 64 years old* with 28.5 percent of riders, which is also the single largest segment of the City population (24.8 percent). All of the age groups match closely the distribution of ages for the City as a whole except for senior citizens aged 65 or over.

It is surprising that the senior citizen population segment (*65 years old and above*) accounts for only 10.6 percent of the weekday riders. This group generally comprises a much larger segment of the typical transit ridership. In fact, the percentage of Metro Ride riders in this age group is lower than the rate of the overall City population that senior citizens comprise (16.5 percent).

Table D-25: Age Distribution of Ridership

Your age is	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses	*City Percent*
Under 18	93	20.5%	20.9%	*22.7%*
18 to 29	89	19.6%	20.0%	*18.5%*
30 to 44	89	19.6%	20.0%	*17.5%*
45 to 64	127	28.0%	28.5%	*24.8%*
65 or over	47	10.4%	10.6%	*16.5%*
No Response	9	2.0%	0.0%	*N/A*
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%	*100.0%*

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

Compared to the 2005 survey results, the Metro Ride ridership has aged. In 2005, 30.8 percent of riders were under the age of 18. In 2011, this percentage has shrunk to 20.9 of riders under the age of 18. Also, the single largest population group in 2011 is those aged 45 to 64, with 28.5

percent of the ridership, an increase of 6.3 percent since the 2005 survey. This aging of the ridership is consistent with the reduction of the percentage of school trips and the increase of shopping and other non-work trips. The percentage of work trips decreased only slightly during the period.

Annual Family Income

Riders were then asked to note their total family income. The survey provided a series of income ranges and riders were asked to mark the appropriate box. The responses are compared to the family income ranges reported by the 2009 American Community survey for the City of Wausau. Approximately 12 percent of the weekday survey respondents did not answer this question. For those that did respond, the chart below summarizes the results. The major finding was that 57 percent of the respondents have total annual family incomes of *less than $10,000*. This is over seventeen times as high as the 3.3 percent of the City of Wausau population overall which is comprised of households with similar annual family incomes.

Further, the rider survey indicated that 5.0 percent of the riders have annual family incomes of *$45,000 or more*. This is twelve times lower than the percentage of households with such incomes in the City overall (60.1 percent). The only income range among riders which is similar to that in the City overall is the *$20,000 to $29,999* range. These findings indicate that lower-income households make up a disproportionately larger percentage of the Metro Ride ridership base than of the City population as a whole. This further demonstrates the strong transit dependency of Metro Ride riders.

From the nationwide 2010 Census, individual income of less than $10,959 is considered to be below the poverty level. For the two-person household, annual incomes of less than $13,991 are considered to be below the poverty level. And, for the average four-person family, incomes below $21,954 are considered to be below the poverty level. The vast majority of Metro Ride riders (80.1 percent) have family incomes below the poverty level for the average family, and most riders (57 percent) have family incomes that are even below the poverty level for individuals.

Table D-26: Annual Family Income

What is your approximate total annual family income?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses	*City Percent*
Under $10,000	227	50.0%	57.0%	*3.3%*
$10,000 to $19,999	92	20.3%	23.1%	*6.8%*
$20,000 to $29,999	30	6.6%	7.5%	*10.0%*
$30,000 to $44,999	29	6.4%	7.3%	*19.8%*
$45,000 or more	20	4.4%	5.0%	*60.1%*
No Response	56	12.3%	0.0%	*N/A*
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%	*100.0%*

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

As compared to the 2005 survey, the Metro Ride ridership is in much poorer financial condition in 2011. In 2005, 35.8 percent of riders had family incomes under $10,000. In 2011, more than half of riders (57%) have family incomes under $10,000. Additionally, the percentage of Metro Ride riders with annual family incomes of less than $20,000 increased by 18.2 percent over the five-year period. These statistics are further testament to the increasing dependency of Metro Ride riders on the bus service.

Residence Community

This question asked riders to indicate where they live. Not surprising, 81.3 percent of weekday riders live within the City of Wausau, which is the primary service area for the Metro Ride system. This response rate is consistent with the fact that a significant number of riders walk less than two blocks to access the Metro Ride system.

Table D-27: Community of Residence

In which community do you live?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Wausau	361	79.5%	81.3%
Schofield	32	7.0%	7.2%
Rothschild	11	2.4%	2.5%
Weston	36	7.9%	8.1%
Stettin	1	0.2%	0.2%
Other	3	0.7%	0.7%
No Response	10	2.2%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

However, the percentages have shifted since the 2005 survey. In 2005, 94.6 percent of riders lived in the City of Wausau, far higher than the 81.3 percent in 2011 (13.3 percent difference).

Weston and Schofield are the communities with the greatest increase in percentage of riders, with increases of 7 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively, clearly related to the new Weston circulator and/or Saturday service to Cedar Creek.

Preference on Service Cuts

When asked if Metro Ride had to cut service which of a series of changes they would prefer, more than a third of riders (37.3 percent) said that raising fares and therefore not cutting service would be their preference. Another 18.1 percent said they would prefer a reduction in service frequently to 60 minutes. Stopping evening and Saturday services were preferable to 15.2 and 14.8 percent of riders, respectively. Metro Ride raised fares in 2008 without a reduction in ridership. As shown throughout the results of the survey, the Metro Ride bus service is vital to the community, and loyal riders would rather deal with higher prices than see service reduced.

Table D-28: Preference on Service Cuts

If we had to cut service, which change would you prefer we do?	# Responses	Percent of Total	Percent of Responses
Reduce frequency to 60 min	82	18.1%	20.0%
Raise fares	153	33.7%	37.3%
Stop Saturday service	67	14.8%	16.3%
Stop Evening service	69	15.2%	16.8%
Other	39	8.6%	9.5%
No Response	44	9.7%	0.0%
Total	454	100.0%	100.0%

Source of Data: 2011 Onboard Survey

A comparable question was not asked of riders in 2005, so no trend information is available.

Survey Summary

Key findings from the rider survey include the fact that the Metro Ride ridership base is increasingly dependent upon the MetroRide service as compared to the previous survey in 2005 and is comprised of a significantly lower income level when compared to the population of the City of Wausau overall. More than half (56.5 percent) of Metro Ride riders said they could not complete their trips without bus service, 75.4 percent of riders said they did not possess a driver's license, and 85.7 percent said that no vehicle was available for their trip. To top it all off, 77.7 percent of riders live in households with one or fewer vehicles. Increases in the transit dependency variables ranged from 5 to 10 percent from 2005 to 2011. Additionally, a staggering 57 percent of Metro Ride riders reported annual family income of *less than $10,000*, a number that is even lower than the poverty threshold for individuals, let alone

families. On the other end of the spectrum, 60.1 percent of Wausau residents have family incomes of $45,000 annually, while the percentage of Metro Ride riders with incomes over that level is only 5 percent. From 2005 to 2011, 18.2 percent more Metro Ride riders reported family incomes of less than $20,000 annually.

With regard to rider attributes, most walk to get to their bus (73.7 percent) and transfer to another bus to complete their trip to their final destination (67.1 percent). Walks to the bus or to the final destination are generally short (the vast majority of riders have to walk less than 2 blocks). Work and school are the most common trip purposes for Metro Ride weekday riders, but the percentage of the trips with the highest increase from the previous survey were shopping trips. Most (68.8 percent) Metro Ride riders have been riding for at least 3 years. The majority of riders use the service 3 to 5 days per week (58.6 percent), but another 30.6 percent of riders use the service 6 days per week. Also, nearly half (48.2 percent) of the ridership stated that they were riding more than the previous year with the other nearly half (46.7 percent) stating that they were riding at about the same frequency as the previous year.

With the fare increase in 2008, Metro Ride did not lose ridership, but many adults switched from paying cash to using a monthly pass, the largest single fare payment option cited in the survey results (29.2 percent of responses). Also, the ridership base is coming from increasing distances compared to the previous survey. Ridership from the City of Wausau decreased from 2005 to 2011, while the largest increases came from the communities of Weston and Schofield.

The results of the survey also indicate an overall level of very favorable satisfaction among riders with various attributes of Metro Ride and an improvement in the overall opinion of Metro Ride riders on the service since 2005. Only one of the four service attribute categories rated by weekday riders attained a score slightly below the threshold of a favorable response which is a combined total of *excellent, very good* and *good* ratings equal to or greater than 90 percent of all responses – *places served* (89.3 percent). *Interior cleanliness*, *on-time performance*, *service frequency* and *places served* all received ratings of *poor* by 2 percent or less of the survey respondents. All categories improved the favorability of their ratings by at least 2 percent since 2005, and *places served* improved by 6.1 percent.

When asked about the importance of various improvements that Metro Ride could make to service, restoring service to Weston, adding summer service on Saturdays, providing evening service, and starting Rib Mountain service all received about the same amount of support (over 20 percent apiece). So, adding/maintaining service to two destinations, Weston and Rib Mountain, and increasing the span of service are most important to the most Metro Ride riders. Increasing the frequency of service was most important to 12.5 percent of survey respondents.

Finally, survey respondents felt that raising fares rather than reducing service level would be preferable if Metro Ride needs to cut service (37.3 percent of respondents). Reducing frequency to 60 minutes was preferred by 20 percent of riders, and stopping evening and Saturday service was preferable to 16.8 and 16.3 percent of riders, respectively. With a strongly

dependent and loyal ridership base, it is not surprising that retaining the base level of service is preferable to riders.

Outreach Sessions

The Metro Ride Transit Development Plan includes an extensive community participation program designed to elicit input from members of the general public, current users of the system, Metro Ride employees, community leaders, key policy decision makers and other transportation stakeholders in Wausau and surrounding communities.

Introduction

This section reports on three aspects of the program: the two public drop-in sessions also held May 24th at the Transit Center, the two driver drop-in sessions held May 25th at the bus garage/administration building, and the stakeholder workshops held on May 24, 2011.

A "drop-in" session is a session where the public talks directly to the consultant team on a one-on-one basis and offers suggestions for improvements or comments on the system. Together, the two sessions produced comments from approximately 50 individuals.

Themed workshops were conducted at the Marathon County offices with various community leaders, policy makers, and decision makers throughout the Greater Wausau area who have a "stake" in both the future of the community as well as in the mobility of Wausau area residents. Topics of discussion included employment and economic development, mobility needs of disadvantaged residents, and the specific needs of the healthcare and education communities.

Rider Drop-in Sessions

Rider drop-in sessions were conducted on Tuesday, May 24th during the mid-day and evening peak periods at the Transit Center. Approximately 50 individuals provided their opinions. Riders were asked their general opinion of the service, what could be done to improve the service, and if there were any other specific locations they would like to be able to reach on the bus. It is interesting to note that 5 individuals (10 percent) who provided opinions were first-time riders the day of the drop-in sessions. Most other people who provided opinions were frequent, seasoned riders.

Riders in general were very complimentary of the service and the drivers. Only two negative comments were received during the drop-in sessions, and they were in specific regard to the impending elimination of Route K and a transfer missed by seconds at the Transit Center. Otherwise, everyone said they were happy with the service and that it gets them where they

need to go, even though they would still like to get to other places not currently served by Metro routes. Some people even went out of their way to make sure compliments on the drivers' friendliness, helpfulness, and safety were heard. There were many positive comments on the cleanliness of buses and the reliability of the service. Many riders also commented on the convenience and value of the monthly pass.

The most common comment made by riders during the drop in sessions, mentioned by almost all of the participants, was the need for service to Rib Mountain. Wal-Mart was mentioned as a specific destination by many, as was Aldi, Best Buy, and the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Many riders commented that even limited service to Rib Mountain would be acceptable (1-3 trips per day) though full service would be preferred.

Also, many riders commented on the need to keep the Weston service (Route K) running. Both residents of Weston and employees of Weston businesses said that they depend on the service. As with the Rib Mountain service comments, riders generally indicated that reduced service frequency and a routing change would be acceptable as long as some service to Weston is retained. Riders said they go to Weston for shopping at Target and Goodwill, work at Wendy's, and medical appointments at the hospital.

The other most common requests from riders at the drop in sessions were for later evening hours and service on Saturdays throughout the year. When probed about how late service should run, riders answered somewhere between 8 PM and 10 PM. When further asked what types of trips they would make in the evening, riders replied that employment trips and shopping trips for people who work during the day would be made.

Other comments made by fewer riders included the need for service to the Veteran's Hospital (VA), the Bone and Joint Clinic in Rib Mountain, the North Valley Workshop (currently 3 trips per day, but sometimes the bus is full), weekday service to Cedar Creek (even if only 1-2 times per day or on Saturdays if year-round), and restoration of the former E route along Bridge Street to the hospital.

A few riders made a point of mentioning that they are 'choice' riders, i.e. they have a car at home but choose to ride the bus for convenience (year-round, but especially in the winter) and cost savings. Many riders commented on the low cost of riding, especially with monthly passes, and in light of the current high price of gas and operating a vehicle. Many people said they would pay more to use the service.

Driver Drop-in Sessions

On Wednesday, May 25th, study staff were on-hand for driver comments at the bus garage before morning shift start and the first tripper shift. Comments were also taken after the first shift change. Drivers had specific comments on routing and service as well as general comments on requests they frequently receive from riders. As was discovered during the rider drop-in

sessions, the most frequent requests made by riders to the drivers are for service to Rib Mountain/Wal-Mart/DMV. Riders also inquire about continuing Weston service, operating Saturday service year-round and operating the service later in the evenings. Other requests include service to Stettin, East Bay, Fleet Farm, and the VA.

It is clear that the drivers genuinely understand the importance of the service and support the system. They are well aware that for many of their riders the bus is their only transportation option. Many drivers also use the bus on their days off. To that end, several drivers commented on the need for information booths and rider training sessions to educate riders on how to ride the bus and read the maps. The lack of times for intermediate stops on the schedule was noted as challenging to many riders, and specifically noted as a deterrent to attracting new riders. Both riders and drivers alike commented on not being able to understand why more people in the community do not use the service as it is very convenient and inexpensive.

Drivers are also concerned about Route K continuing. Many commented that the people who ride Route K are in the greatest need for the bus service in the system. They also commented that the routing of Route K could be changed to be more efficient and attract other riders.

The drivers also thought the service could be modified somewhat to attract more work trips and had opinions on how to increase ridership, including advertising and educating riders as noted above. A couple of drivers mentioned that Aspiris Hospital pays for bus service for their employees but only a few people take advantage of this option. They think that an information/training session for hospital employees would also increase ridership. Some also commented that the former Route E had been geared for employment trips, but it was eliminated before some of the newer trip generators were completed.

Some drivers commented that driving the school children can be challenging and that a lot of kids 'hang around' the Transit Center after school. One driver did note, however, that police officers on bicycles have been recently making an effort to circle around the Transit Center during the busy times and that has helped cut down on the groups of kids hanging around and the fighting.

Specific routing suggestions included operating the Route D on the current detour pattern all the time instead of going back through the transit center as was the routing when the park construction was not underway. Also, the drivers thought Route A should not go down Zimmerman but should go straight down Sturgeon Eddy as Zimmerman is narrow and hard to navigate, especially in the winter. Also, some drivers said they would like to see the X9 run full time again (the old Fox Run).

Community Workshops

Community workshops were held all day on Tuesday May 24th 2011 and stakeholders representing various interests were invited to attend. Transit Commission members and

municipal leaders were invited to attend any or all sessions. Separate sessions were conducted on the following topics:

- Employment transportation and economic development
- Transit needs of transit dependent population
- Non-emergency medical transportation
- Student transportation needs

The following individuals, with their affiliations, attended at least one of the sessions:

- Rachel Riehle, NAOMI
- Fred Heider, Rothschild resident
- George Peterson, President, Village of Rothschild
- Gaylene Rhoden, Town Manager, Town of Rib Mountain
- Heather Wessling, City of Wausau, Community Development
- Greg Seubert, Metro Ride
- David Mack, Wausau Metropolitan Planning Organization and Marathon County Planning
- Walter Ludwig, Marshfield Clinic
- Mark Moser, St. Clares Hospital
- Christine Ellis, Globe University
- Jamie Kahon, Globe University

Highlights of the discussion of employment transportation and general unmet needs follow:

- The group discussed a role for the chamber of commerce and The Jobs Center is promoting transit in the community, particularly as it might relate to getting workers to entry level positions such as those at call centers or distribution centers.
- A discussion about the West Wausau Industrial Park included questions about the needs of employers there to get people to jobs. It was pointed out that several surveys have been done with little interest in the past, and that from other projects both here and in other communities it has been found that unless there are more jobs than applicants there is little need for transportation generally found in these locations. The City might be interested in sending out a survey similar to that used for the last TDP to touch base with employers.
- Rib Mountain was a focal point for discussion, again in part focusing on entry level job access. The Town residents and board are looking to the business community to show support for a bus service and are not interested in funding it from public monies at this time. A business investment district was perceived to be the vehicle that might be able to promote a service, but that has not gotten off the ground. Many businesses indicate they are dependent upon corporate offices to make these decisions; only Walmart among the national companies showed any real interest in taking action. A few others did show interest.

- A new Goodwill site off Rib Mountain Drive is going to be inaccessible to transit, as will the one in Weston once that route is terminated due to no local financial support by that town.
- Rib Mountain was also concerned about the Weston situation and did not want to be put in a similar position, whereby a service is started and then eliminated due to lack of local support. They do not want to appear to be the bad guys if a service is started using other funding and then that funding is pulled, leaving the Town to either pick up the local share or appear to be anti-transit. Stability is a big issue.
- It was pointed out that a route in Weston would also bring in ADA services that could benefit town residents up to ¾ miles from the route.
- Regarding Weston, NAOMI is a faith –based organization that sees transit access a major issue for the community and its constituents. They are going before the Weston town board to ask that the service elimination be reversed or at least studied further before it is finalized.

The following outlines points made during a discussion for medical transportation:

- Naomi again was very concerned with access to the medical facilities in Weston, and pointed out their findings were that though the ridership was low, those who used it were among the most transit dependent and needy in the community.
- For St. Clare's, the issue was discharge of clients for those who came in by ambulance in particular. The Hospital needs buses to get folks home or must use other means like taxis, or finding volunteers for those who do not have family to get them. Having the bus is a real issue to them as finding van services is becoming very difficult in the community. They also need services that do not need a great deal of advanced notice, so scheduling 24 hours in advance is out of the question. They may have 20 departures a day with about 10 – 20 percent being problematic for them. They also see Saturday and Sunday as important for visitors.
- While there appeared to be little employee use at St. Clare's, the Plaza Drive Marshfield Clinic in West Wausau does have good use by employees and patients, and the service works well and stops at the door. The Weston site is all ambulatory and the actual usage was unknown to the attendee.

The final group of comments were made in regard to Globe University and its site at Cedar Creek. Globe was not there during the last study and is a new potential source of riders:

- Globe is very interested in getting regular bus service to its campus, where they have 353 full time students, with about 320 from the area. The students are in the lower economic brackets, as indicated by a 70 percent use of Pell Grants for tuition. The students are mostly in the 26-35 years of age bracket, and there are a lot of single parents who use United Way assistance for day care. The University has a lot of externships and needs connections to them for many students in addition to regular

trips to the campus for classes. Students come on average 3.42 days a week according to a survey done by the school. There are evening classes until 10 PM.

- Gas prices had an impact on access to the campus, as demonstrated by a drop in the number of attendees for courses.
- The representatives had a survey they presented to us at the meeting. They feel about 1/3 of their students would use a bus service regularly based on the frequency of calls she gets and the number of folks using the ride board.
- The school is on a quarters system, so they do operate in the summer, as opposed to traditional two semester programs.

Globe may be interested in making a financial commitment to a service. They suggested that Metro Ride meets with the students to get more information from them on needs.

Summary

All of the conversations and surveys form the basis for understanding the needs of the community from both users and non-users, and will be important inputs into the definition of needs and opportunities along with the ridership studies and operating data, peer analyses, etc.

Appendix E SERVICE EVALUATION, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

Previous technical memoranda provided an overview of the environment in which Metro Ride operates, the service provided by Metro Ride, and public outreach process for this study. This chapter presents an analysis and evaluation of the Metro Ride fixed routes, identifying the issues and strengths of each route. This chapter is divided into three parts -- performance evaluation, route diagnostics, and issues and opportunities.

Performance Evaluation

Evaluating the Metro Ride system against a set of service standards or goals is the first step in the evaluation process. The process allows one to deal with a variety of issues related to the quality and quantity of bus service. This section presents proposed service standards and lists Metro Ride performance for each standard. This provides an initial guidance for the development of service strategies. It should be noted that viewing any system with regard to a set of standards or goals requires an understanding of local conditions as well as the trade-offs associated with providing service. In the Wausau Urbanized area, for example, Metro Ride cannot meet the coverage standards because several key communities do not participate in the system, which by Wisconsin state law prohibits Metro Ride from providing services to those communities. As another example, in some cases, it will be acceptable to be below the target; e.g., while it is desirable to provide 30 minute peak service on all routes, doing so on routes in less productive areas might mean not meeting the standards for fiscal condition. The analysis discusses these issues and the competing requirements of providing extensive coverage and frequent service while meeting the need to maintain cost effectiveness and stay within a limited budget. It will identify where standards should be met and where standards should be used as goals for Metro Ride to use in planning future service changes.

Table E-1 provides a summary of the standards/goals and the results for Metro Ride, which are discussed below.

Service Coverage

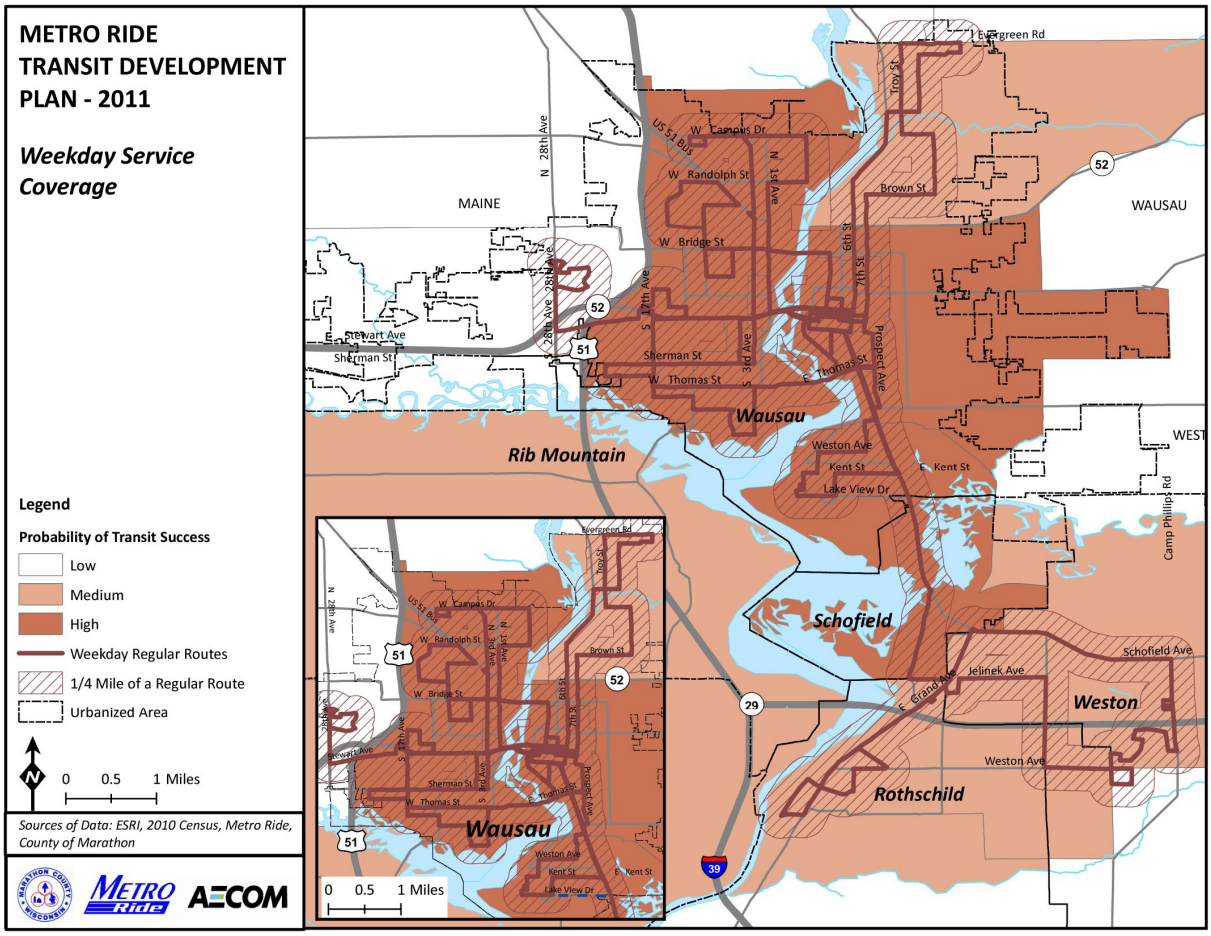
This broad category covers standards for availability, frequency, span, and directness.

Availability - One of the key decisions in providing transit is determining where service should be provided and the spacing of bus routes. Figure E-1 shows an overlay of the Metro Ride fixed routes on a map showing jurisdictional boundaries and the transit score, which is a rating of the probability of transit successfulness based on population characteristics.

Table E-1: Service Standards and Metro Ride Result

Category	Standard	Metro Ride Result
Service Coverage		
Availability	• Residential areas • Major activity centers • Public investment	• Key residential areas served within Wausau • Rib Mountain not served • West Wausau Industrial Park, some west Wausau healthcare, Rasmussen College, Globe University, and Women's Community not served
Frequency	• 30 Minute peak • 60 Minute off-peak	• Route C does not meet peak standard • Route X9 does not meet off-peak standard
Span	• 6 AM to 6 PM all routes • 6 PM to 10 PM selected services	• Local routes start service at 6:15 AM • No evening service
Directness	• Maximum 30 percent of passengers transfer	• Metro Ride appears to meet standard
Patron Convenience		
Speed	• Average 15 MPH	• Regular routes average 14.6 MPH
Loading	• 25 percent standees for short periods acceptable	• Meets Standard
Bus Stop Spacing	• 5 to 7 blocks per mile in core (every other block) • Fringe 4 to 5 per mile, as needed based on land uses	• Generally meets standard
Dependability	• No missed trip • 95 percent on-time service (0 to 5 minutes late) • No trips leaving early	• No missed trips observed • At least 95% of trips observed trips on-time
Road Call Ratio	• 4,000 to 6,000 miles per road call	• 23,600 miles – exceeds standard
Fiscal Condition		
Fare Structure	• Qualitative criteria	• Meets criteria
Farebox Recovery	• Significantly alter routes less than 60 percent of average (14.4 percent average) • Review and modify routes between 60 percent and 80 percent of average	• Route K falls below 60 percent of average on weekdays • All routes *except* Routes A and G fall below 60 percent of system average on Saturdays
Productivity (Pass./Hr.)	• Significantly alter routes less than 60 percent of average (20.8 pass/hr average) • Review and modify routes between 60 percent and 80 percent of average	• Route K falls below 60 percent of average on weekdays • All routes except Routes A and G fall below 60 percent of average on Saturdays • Route G falls between 60 and 80 percent of average on Saturdays
Passenger Comfort		
Waiting Shelters	• 25 or more boardings	• Review two Shopko stops, Stewart & 12th, and Sherman & 3rd
Bus Stop Signs	• Denote Metro Ride and route	• Signs do not denote route
Revenue Equipment	• Clean and good condition	• Meets Standard
Public Information	• Timetable, maps, advertising	• Meets Standard

Figure E-1: Metro Ride Regular Route Weekday Service Coverage



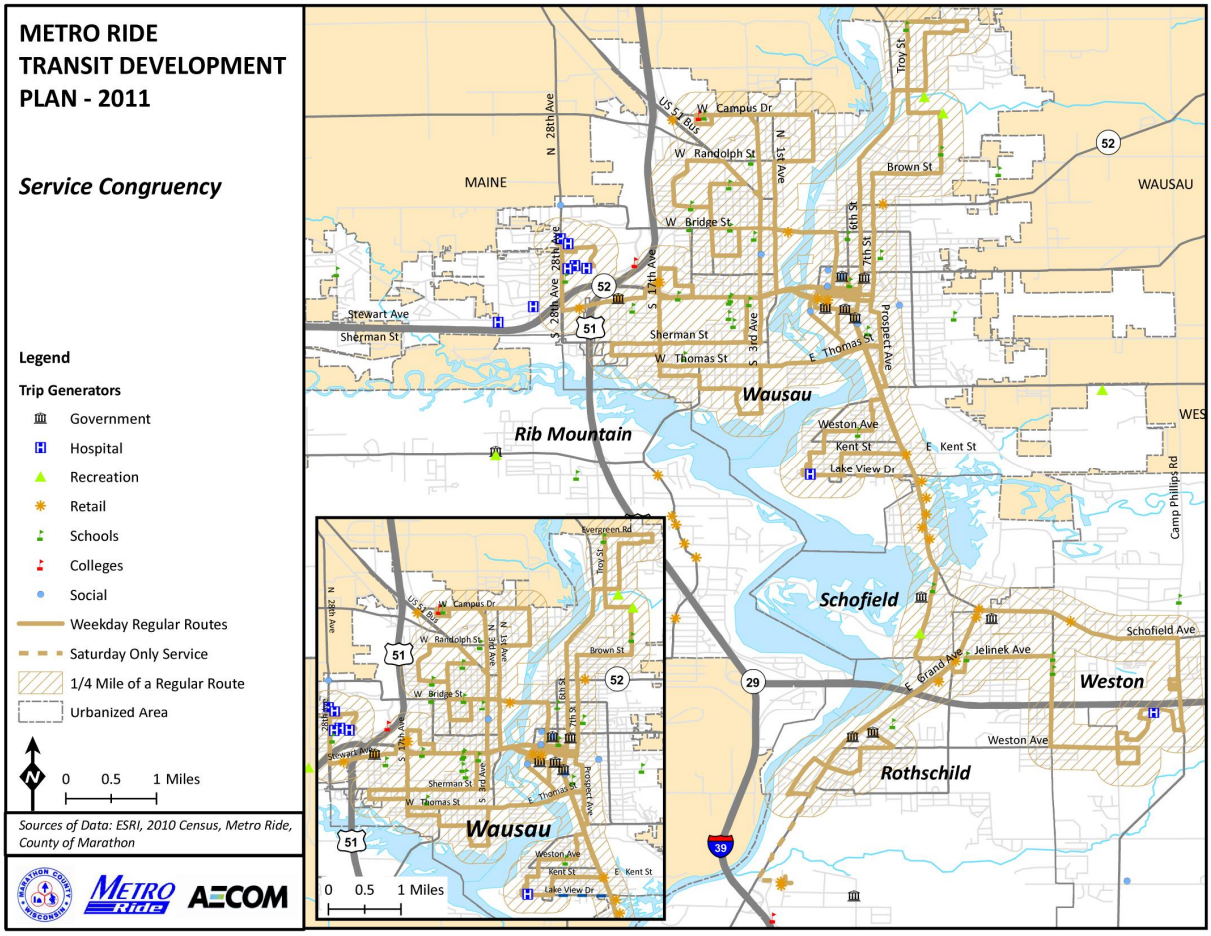
The standard for Metro Ride regarding the *coverage of residential areas* has two dimensions. First, Metro Ride should provide service within 3/4 mile to all residents in at least 95 percent of the populated area within the existing Metro Ride service area, based on participation in the system. Second, Metro Ride should strive to incorporate other communities in the urbanized area, with a goal of bringing 80 percent of the urbanized area population within ¾ of a mile of Metro Ride service as long as there are sufficient residential densities for providing fixed route service.

On this basis, Metro Ride meets or exceeds the applicable route coverage standard for its current service area in regard to the residential (production) trip end component, but falls short in the urbanized area of Rib Mountain.

Routes are generally spaced well, with most having well defined territories. As the map shows, most of the City of Wausau is within ¼ mile of a bus route, which includes many of the residential areas, important destinations, and major employers. Figure E-2 shows the location of major trip generators in the Wausau area. Most of the areas that are outside the coverage of the route network are located in the fringes of the city in areas that are just out of reach of the

current route network. The main area within the City of Wausau that has no transit service is the Wausau West Industrial Park (72nd Avenue) and its surrounding areas. Also, Rasmussen College and other healthcare and social services agencies in the northwest section of Wausau are not served. Neither are Globe University or Cedar Creek Mall in Rothschild (the mall is served only on Saturdays during the school year).

Figure E-2: Service Congruency



Service is also provided into Rothschild, Schofield and Weston, each of which provides a local share of the operating subsidy for service. The elected officials of these three communities meet and discuss service needs and coverage for their communities with Metro Ride and serve on the Transit Commission.

There is one other non-participating community, however, that has large employers and major destinations that are not served by Metro Ride buses, specifically Rib Mountain. Among these destinations are some of the most attractive trip generators for transit (as seen in many other communities), most notably Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, and other big box stores on Rib Mountain Drive.

Finally, regarding *public investment*, to meet WisDOT requirements, the Metro Ride service standards should state that service outside of the city limits can be provided only when the jurisdiction or institution(s) served provides the local share of the operating investment via a written agreement.

Frequency - For a city of Wausau's size, the proposed headway/frequency is 30 minutes during peak periods, and 60 minutes during off-peak periods. Tripper services should be operated on an "as needed" basis. All routes, except Route C, exceed this standard, operating 30 minutes all day. Route C operates 60 minutes all day. The headways need to be examined in concert with the trip generation and potential of each route to balance ridership and resource utilization to achieve productivities and unit costs that are within acceptable bounds for the system.

Span - The duration of service needs to consider both need/demand and the availability of funds. The standard for Metro Ride for regular route service should be 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM (12 hours) on weekdays, and 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (8 hours) on Saturdays. Trippers once again should be provided as needed.

During the weekdays, Metro Ride meets the 12 hour span, although the first pulse is at 6:15 AM and service runs to 6:30 PM rather than 6 AM to 6 PM. This does not appear to present a problem for early morning work trips and may not require an adjustment. Saturday hours exceed the standard, with the last pulse at 5:30 PM.

Mid-sized cities are increasingly looking to restore evening hours, especially in light of access to work programs, and the growth of evening retail and service industry jobs. Thus, Metro Ride should have a standard of selected evening service to 10:00 PM, and should base the decision to provide such service on transportation need, community support, and fiscal resources.

Directness - The identified standard for directness for this project is the percentage of transfers being made by bus riders. For a pulse system with radial routes, transferring is usually high, and a standard of 30 percent (transfer trips/revenue trips) is the maximum rate for transferring. Metro Ride appears to meet the standard.

The pulse system is designed to allow the maximum number of people the opportunity to easily transfer between routes, and to allow a trip in the system to be made with not more than one transfer. This allows Metro Ride to provide a simple and more frequent service than might be possible with a grid network, and makes efficient use of resources while providing excellent coverage.

While a percentage transfer rate was not calculated as part of the analyses for this project, the observed rate as well as the number of bus to bus transfers identified from the rider survey indicates that Metro Ride operates within the standard.

A second measure of directness evaluates the number of one-way loops and the directness of the bus route in comparison to an auto trip. The more loops and jogs in a route, the less likely

the route provides a direct, timely trip to the transfer center. Loops are generally used to spread service and increase coverage in areas where there are insufficient resources or demand potential for additional services. Metro Ride has a few looped sections within its route network which spread coverage; the penalty paid by riders may be a short trip duration in one direction and a long trip in the other. These sections need to be examined with regard to their ridership productivity on a case by case basis, which is covered subsequently in this chapter, particularly Route K.

Patron Convenience

This section looks at Metro Ride' performance in areas related to patron convenience. It includes a review of speed, loadings, bus stops, and service dependability including road call/breakdown frequency.

Speed - Based on work in other small cities, the average system speed should not exceed 15 miles per hour. Since routes operate in a range of environments, this standard can be broken down to set standards for routes operating in core areas, fringe areas, and between cities. The standards by these types of areas are 8 to 12 miles per hour in the core, 10 -18 miles in the fringe areas, and 20 -25 miles per hour for intercity services.

Based on NTD data, the average speed for all Metro Ride routes is 15.4 mph, and 14.9 for the urban routes (excludes Routes C, K, F and L). Individual routes vary and will be discussed below.

Loading - The service standard should be that every passenger gets a seat except for short periods of time associated with peak load periods (typically the end of school), during which time there should be no more than 25 percent standees for only a limited duration. Based on field observations and the on/off count program this standard is being met. Only one trip had more than 25 passengers and that was the 7 AM outbound trip on Route D with 37 passengers.

At the same time, while there is no minimum load factor, e.g. loads should not fall below a given number of riders, observations of the ridership by trip indicate that there are significant portions of the day when peak loads rarely exceed 10 passengers on a given route, which may be an indicator of an over-supply of service to these routes for selected time periods. Of all weekday trips, 18.8 percent operate with maximum loads of 10 or higher. Again, the route by route studies will look at these conditions in detail to determine which routes, if any, may require less service than is presently being provided.

Bus Stop Spacing - The spacing of stops should balance patron convenience and speed of operation. The core standard calls for a stop every other block; in fringe areas, stops can be as far apart as .2 to .25 miles (4 to 5 per mile), based on need. Field observations of all Metro Ride routes indicate that the stop placements in Wausau meet the standard.

Dependability - Riders require dependable service, defined as service that arrives on time and gets them to their destination on time, particularly if they are going to work, to school, or to an appointment. The standard should be two-fold: 100.0 percent of all trips should be operated (e.g., no missed trips), and 95.0 percent of the trips should run on-time (e.g., not more than 5 minutes late). Finally, no trip should run ahead of schedule at any point along a route. During field observations, Metro Ride operated on-time with no missed trips.

Fiscal Condition

These standards assess financial situation, the use of the Metro Ride system, and the relationship of service used to the amount of service provided. While there are any number of possible criteria that van be used to define fiscal condition, many of which will be studied in detail in the route diagnostics section, for the purpose of defining general standards and overall condition, three were selected: fare structure, farebox recovery, and productivity.

Fare Structure - The fare structure should meet qualitative considerations set by board policy. It should be simple to understand, offer convenience to the user, and generate reasonable revenues for the system.

With regard to equity issues, the fare policy offers a number of discounts based either upon age or disability, or upon the use of a variety of media. Free transfers are provided so that those needing to use two buses for a trip are not penalized. All routes are priced the same, using a $1.25 base fare.

Farebox Recovery - In 2009 Metro Ride performance in farebox recovery was 26.9 percent lower than the national peer group as reported in the peer group chapter and 7.8 percent lower than the Wisconsin peer group.

The standards for individual routes relate to the system average. Thus, for this plan routes achieving less than 60 percent of the system average, or 8.5 percent, should be studied and significantly altered; routes falling between 60 and 80 percent of the system average, or 8.5 percent and 11.4 percent, need to be carefully reviewed and possibly modified. On this basis, all routes except Routes A, B and G fall below 60 percent on Saturdays and Route K falls below 60 percent on weekdays.

Productivity - Similar to farebox recovery, this measure relates individual route performance to the overall performance of the system. Overall, Metro Ride carried 20.8 passengers per vehicle hour during the survey period. In 2009 Metro Ride performed slightly below its national peers, which averaged 22.0 passengers per hour, and exceeded the Wisconsin peers, which averaged 18.8 passengers per vehicle hour. Further examination needs to focus the Saturday routes and Route K on weekdays.

Passenger Comfort

Passenger comfort standards pertain to the passenger environment that Metro Ride provides. These standards examine the placement and condition of shelters and bus stop signs, the comfort and condition of the revenue equipment, and the quality of public information.

Waiting Shelters - The standard for waiting shelters for a system of this size is to place one at any location having 25 or more daily boardings, generally spread throughout the day (e.g., not 25 boardings for a single load and no boardings for the remaining part of the day). Under this standard, Metro Ride has shelters in all appropriate locations except four – Shopko, Sherman Street and 3rd Avenue, and Stewart Avenue and 12th Avenue in Wausau and Shopko in Rothschild.

Bus Stop Signs - Metro Ride signs identify the Metro Ride system but not the individual route serving the stop, which should be an element of the bus stop standard. The quality and condition of many of the signs could be updated and used more aggressively to market the system.

Revenue Equipment - The buses are well-maintained and clean and comfortable. The public image is very good, and we received no negative comments about the buses' age or condition.

Public Information – The public "Bus Route Map & Schedule" is very easy to read and shows the relevant information including phone numbers, fares, and route information. The one issue with the route schedules is that having no intermediate time points along the route may make it difficult for people, particularly new or potential riders, to judge when the bus will stop at intermediate stops.

Two improvements in public image have been made in response to comments made during the previous study in 2005. First, the new Transit Center was constructed and presents a positive image of the system. Second, the name of the system was changed from WATS to Metro Ride in order to reduce the focus on the City of Wausau and to market the service as more regional in nature.

Summary

Overall, Metro Ride meets most of the proposed standards as set in the opening of this section, and is well-managed and well-received in the community. Although the overall performance statistics are acceptable against the Metro Ride peers, there is some concern at the route level, specifically pertaining to individual ridership levels, load factors, and productivity. These statistics are reviewed and analyzed in the next section on route diagnostics.

Route Diagnostics

Five important data factors were collected or calculated to create the database and calculations for the route diagnostics: average daily ridership, daily revenue hours, daily revenue miles, daily operating cost, and daily farebox revenue. Average daily ridership for regular routes was taken directly from the ridership counts taken between April 14 and April 16, 2011 for both weekday and Saturday. Revenue hour figures were taken from the scheduled driver hours sheets provided at the beginning of the study. Revenue miles were provided by Metro Ride staff for both local and express routes. Daily operating cost was calculated by determining an average cost per hour based on 2010 operating cost and revenue hours,[2] multiplied by average daily revenue hours. Daily farebox revenue was calculated based on 2010 total operating revenue and total passengers,[3] multiplied by average daily ridership. Table E-2 presents the five factors used for the route diagnostics.

Table E-2: Route Level Ridership, Operating Data, Cost, and Revenue

Route	Average Daily Ridership	Daily Revenue Hours	Daily Revenue Miles	Daily Operating Cost	Daily Farebox Revenue
A	357	12.25	161	$877	$214
B	382	12.25	198	$877	$229
C	228	12.50	209	$895	$137
D	287	12.25	173	$877	$172
G	260	12.25	173	$877	$156
H	231	12.25	211	$877	$139
I	224	12.25	181	$877	$134
J	243	12.25	193	$877	$146
K	97	12.50	201	$895	$58
Weekday Regular Routes Total	*2,309*	*110.75*	*1,701*	*$7,930*	*$1,385*
A	203	8.75	116	$627	$122
B	90	8.75	142	$627	$54
D	77	8.75	124	$627	$46
F	75	8.50	124	$609	$45
G	129	8.75	124	$627	$77
H	75	8.75	151	$627	$45
I	54	8.75	130	$627	$32
J	84	8.75	139	$627	$50
K	33	4.00	62	$286	$20
L	12	4.00	64	$286	$7
Saturday Total	*832*	*77.75*	*1,177*	*$5,567*	*$499*

As a note, the express bus network in not under review in this study. However, based solely on the numbers presented, it is clear that the express bus network is highly cost-effective and

[2] 2010 total operating expense of $3,109,134.49, 2010 total revenue hours of 43423.88 hours, for an average cost per hour of $71.60

[3] 2010 total operating revenue of $462,164.58, 2010 total passengers of 774,081, for an average revenue per passenger of $0.60

productive, and highly beneficial to the overall statistical profile of the Metro Ride program. In 2010, express routes carried 236,196 passengers on 90,381 miles and 9,821 hours of service. From these totals, the express routes carry 24 passengers per hour and 2.6 passengers per mile of service. These statistics for express routes compare to 21 passengers per hour and 1.4 passengers per mile of service on the regular routes from 2010 totals and 2011 observations.

By the same token, this means that the regular routes, benefiting as a whole statistically from the impact of the express buses, may operate at somewhat lower levels in relation to the overall system average, and that each route needs to be closely examined to account for this impact.

Service Effectiveness

Service effectiveness describes the amount utilization of service per unit of transit service provided. Service effectiveness is measured based on two indicators, passengers per mile and passengers per hour. While both passengers per mile and passengers per hour are presented, only passengers per hour is included in the route scoring and ranking presented at the end of the route diagnostics section to avoid duplication.

Passengers per Mile – This passenger per mile figures and rankings are presented below in Table E-3 for both weekdays and Saturdays. This indicator measures the number of passengers carried each day by each route versus the number of miles per day the route operates. This table shows that Route A carries the most people per mile of service provided. The route that carries the fewest passengers per mile during weekdays is Route K, picking up less than one passenger per mile. The route with the highest passengers per mile on Saturdays is also Route A, while Route L is has the lowest number of passengers per mile on Saturdays.

Table E-3: Passengers per Mile

Route	Weekday Passengers per Mile	Weekday Rank	Saturday Passengers per Mile	Saturday Rank
A	2.21	1	1.75	1
B	1.93	2	0.63	3
D	1.66	3	0.62	4
G	1.50	4	1.04	2
J	1.26	5	0.61	5
I	1.24	6	0.42	9
H	1.10	7	0.50	8
C	1.09	8	N/A	N/A
K	0.48	9	0.53	7
F	N/A	N/A	0.60	6
L	N/A	N/A	0.19	10
Average	*1.38*		*0.69*	

The systemwide passenger per mile figure is 1.38 on weekdays and 0.69 on Saturdays, the latter figure indicating a cause for concern for the system.

Routes H, C and K all require review based upon not meeting the 80 percent target for weekday service. For Saturday service, Routes L, I, H, and K are all below 80% of system average.

Passengers per Hour – The passengers per hour figures, which include rankings, is presented for both weekdays and Saturdays on Table E-4. This indicator measures the number of passengers carried each day by each route versus the number of hours per day the route operates. This table shows that Route B has the highest passengers per hour on weekdays and Route A has the most passengers per hour on Saturdays. On weekdays the lowest performing route in terms of passengers per hour is Route K, while Route L is the lowest performer on Saturdays. The average passenger per hour on weekdays is 20.88, while the Saturday average is 10.14 passengers per hour, which at less than half of the weekday average requires further analysis.

Only Route K falls below 60% of system average on weekdays and no other routes fall below 80% of system average. Route I falls between 60 percent and 80 percent of this standard on Saturdays while Route L falls below 60 percent of this standard on Saturdays. Each will be studied in more depth to determine what changes, if any, can improve performance.

Table E-4: Passengers per Hour

Route	Weekday Passengers per Hour	Weekday Rank	Saturday Passengers per Hour	Saturday Rank
B	31.18	1	10.29	3
A	29.14	2	23.20	1
D	23.43	3	8.80	6
G	21.22	4	14.74	2
J	19.84	5	9.60	4
H	18.86	6	8.57	7
I	18.29	7	6.17	9
C	18.24	8	N/A	N/A
K	7.76	9	8.25	8
F	N/A	N/A	8.82	5
L	N/A	N/A	3.00	10
Average	*20.88*		*10.14*	

The productivity of the regular routes on weekdays ranges from 7.76 to 31.18 passengers per hour. Because all but Route C operate with 30 minute headways, this means that the average loads are between 4 and 15 for these routes, an indication that there may be too much service offered during parts of the day on any or all of the routes. Saturday levels are even lower and need to be studied as well. These data also relate to the perception that there are always "empty buses" even though the overall productivity is generally solid on weekdays. Ultimately,

there is a need to investigate each route by time of day along with data on key stops and generators along each to determine the best trade-off between service levels and resource utilization.

Financial Efficiency

Financial efficiency measures the cost of providing transit service per unit of service provided. Two indicators; cost per mile and cost per hour can be used to determine financial efficiency. Since the daily operating cost was determined using an average cost per hour figure for the system as a whole and not for each individual route, only the cost per mile indicator varies from route to route in this analysis and therefore is presented for the review of financial efficiency.

Cost per Mile – Table E-5 presents the cost per mile for each route and the route rankings for both weekdays and Saturdays. This indicator presents the total daily route cost per revenue of mile operated, and is an indicator of how well resources are being used to produce a unit of service. The Metro Ride average cost per mile is $4.70 on weekdays and $4.73 on Saturdays. The nationwide peer average for cost per mile is $5.57, so Metro Ride is performing better than average.

Table E-5: Cost per Mile

Route	Weekday Cost per Mile	Weekday Rank	Saturday Cost per Mile	Saturday Rank
H	$4.16	1	$4.14	1
C	$4.28	2	N/A	N/A
B	$4.42	3	$4.40	2
K	$4.46	4	$4.59	5
J	$4.54	5	$4.51	4
I	$4.85	6	$4.83	6
D	$5.06	7	$5.04	8
G	$5.06	8	$5.04	9
A	$5.44	9	$5.41	10
F	N/A	N/A	$4.89	7
L	N/A	N/A	$4.47	3
Average	*$4.70*		*$4.73*	

The route with the highest cost per mile on weekdays and Saturdays is Route A. Because all routes but Route C operate on a uniform headway with the same number of hours of service, there is a direct correlation between average route length and cost per mile, with longer routes having a lower cost per mile than shorter routes.

The objective is to maximize the number of miles operated per hour without creating routes that are too long with consistently poor on-time performance. Each route will be reviewed with

this perspective in mind as suggestions are made for small changes, realignments, or new routes.

Cost Effectiveness

Cost effectiveness measures the effectiveness of the system from a financial standpoint. The cost effectiveness indicators are cost per passenger, subsidy per passenger, and farebox recovery. The cost effectiveness indicators that are calculated for the route score and ranking at the end of the route diagnostics section are cost per passenger and farebox recovery.

Cost per Passenger – Table E-6 presents the cost per passenger and ranking for each route on both weekdays and Saturdays. This indicator divides the route operating cost among all passengers that use the route. This table shows that the route with the lowest cost per passenger (e.g., the best performance) weekdays is Route B and on Saturdays is Route A. Route K has the highest cost per passenger on weekdays (over two times as high as the next highest), while Route L has the highest cost per passenger on Saturdays (double the next highest). The average cost per passenger is $3.96 on weekdays and $9.11 on Saturdays. The nationwide peer average cost per passenger is $3.90. On weekdays, Routes I and C are slightly higher than the peer average, but Route K is significantly so. On Saturdays, only Route A is below the peer average, meaning that all other routes are doing significantly poorer than the nationwide peer average.

Table E-6: Cost per Passenger

Route	Weekday Cost per Passenger	Weekday Rank	Saturday Cost per Passenger	Saturday Rank
B	$2.30	1	$6.96	3
A	$2.46	2	$3.09	1
D	$3.06	3	$8.14	6
G	$3.37	4	$4.86	2
J	$3.61	5	$7.46	4
H	$3.80	6	$8.35	7
I	$3.92	7	$11.60	9
C	$3.93	8	N/A	N/A
K	$9.23	9	$8.68	8
F	N/A	N/A	$8.11	5
L	N/A	N/A	$23.87	10
Average	*$3.96*		*$9.11*	

Weekday Routes I, C, K and all Saturday routes (particularly Route L) need the most attention regarding this factor.

Farebox Recovery – The farebox recovery for each route is presented on Table E-7 for both weekdays and Saturdays. Farebox recovery measures the percent of operating cost covered by fares, and is an outcome heavily influenced by the ridership productivity of a route against its total operating cost. It is calculated by dividing fare revenue, calculated by multiplying ridership by the Metro Ride average fare, by operating cost.

Table E-7 shows that Route B has the highest farebox recovery on weekdays and Route A has the highest farebox recovery on Saturdays. Route K has the lowest farebox recovery on weekdays, while Route L has the lowest farebox recovery on Saturdays. The average farebox recovery for Metro Ride is 17.5 percent on weekdays and only 8.5 percent on Saturdays, again indicating concern regarding the provision of Saturday service. Only Route K is below 60 percent of the system average on weekdays, while no other routes are below 80 percent of the system average. On Saturdays, Route L falls below 60 percent of the system average and Route I falls between 60 and 80 percent of the system average.

Table E-7: Farebox Recovery

Route	Weekday Farebox Recovery	Weekday Rank	Saturday Farebox Recovery	Saturday Rank
B	26.1%	1	8.6%	3
A	24.4%	2	19.4%	1
D	19.6%	3	7.4%	6
G	17.8%	4	12.4%	2
J	16.6%	5	8.0%	4
H	15.8%	6	7.2%	7
I	15.3%	7	5.2%	9
C	15.3%	8	N/A	N/A
K	6.5%	9	6.9%	8
F	N/A	N/A	7.4%	5
L	N/A	N/A	2.5%	10
Average	*17.5%*		*8.5%*	

Route Ranking

The rankings of each of the routes for three indicators can be used to calculate a cumulative rank score for each route on both weekday and Saturdays. The three indicators include passenger per hour to rate service effectiveness, and cost per passenger and farebox recovery to rate cost effectiveness. Financial efficiency was not rated because the ratings of the routes in this category correlated directly to route length, which does not measure performance. Routes with a higher score are indicative of poorer performing routes which need to be addressed. Routes with a lower score better performing routes that may only require monitoring or minor adjustment in order to integrate better into the Metro Ride network or serve new generators.

Weekday Route Ranking – Table E-8 presents the weekday route rankings. All of the routes have the same ranking across all categories considered which would be expected given the preceding discussion but is not always the case in these studies. Route B is the best performing route on weekdays while Route K ranks the lowest. Routes H, I, C, and K are the four poorest performers and need the most discussion and study. These lower ranking routes may require redesign, restructuring, or elimination, all of which will be considered.

Table E-8: Weekday Route Ranking

Route	Passengers per Hour Rank	Cost per Passenger Rank	Farebox Recovery Rank	Cumulative Rank Score	Rank
B	1	1	1	3	1
A	2	2	2	6	2
D	3	3	3	9	3
G	4	4	4	12	4
J	5	5	5	15	5
H	6	6	6	18	6
I	7	7	7	21	7
C	8	8	8	24	8
K	9	9	9	27	9

Saturday Route Ranking – Table E-9 presents the Saturday route rankings. As has been noted in earlier sections, the overall performance of Metro Ride on Saturdays is not good and needs review. The overall productivity of 10 riders per hour is indicative of a need to address the levels of service provided and the need to focus attention on obtaining agreements to provide service to the unserved trip generators in surrounding communities.

Table E-9: Saturday Route Ranking

Route	Passengers per Hour Rank	Cost per Passenger Rank	Farebox Recovery Rank	Cumulative Rank Score	Rank
A	1	1	1	3	1
G	2	2	2	6	2
B	3	3	3	9	3
J	4	4	4	12	4
F	5	5	5	15	5
D	6	6	6	18	6
H	7	7	7	21	7
K	8	8	8	24	8
I	9	9	9	27	9
L	10	10	10	30	10

Within that context of change, the table shows that on Saturdays Route A and Route G are the best performing routes, and that Routes H, K, I, and L are the four poorest performers. The

poorest performers need the most attention, even as the entire Saturday program needs attention given its overall performance in relation to the standards and weekday ridership levels.

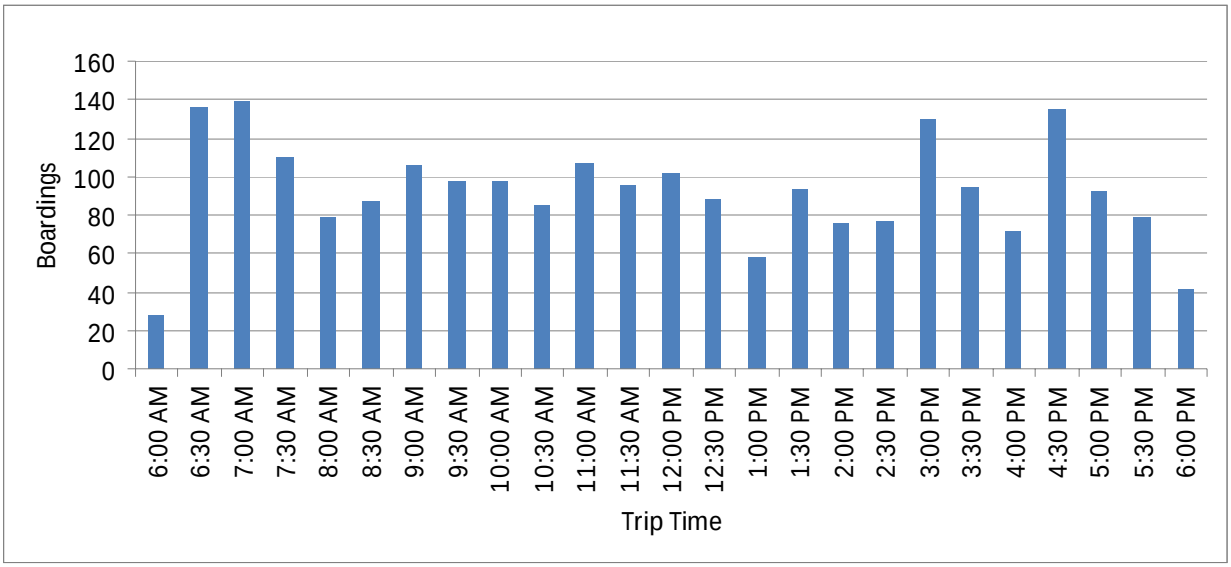
Time of Day Analysis

An analysis of ridership by time of day is key to understanding some of the dimensions of the performance described above. Looking at the system as a whole and each route by time of day, essentially by each trip, provides details that help to understand productivity levels, cost per trip data, and other quantifiable results. Furthermore, looking at each route on a per trip basis provides a profile to study ridership levels in relation to operating headways, and ultimately allows one to determine is current levels of service are appropriate to the results.

On weekdays all routes provide 30 minute service except for Route C, which operates all day on 60 minute headways. On Saturdays Route K and L are interlined, which results in 60 minute service for each route.

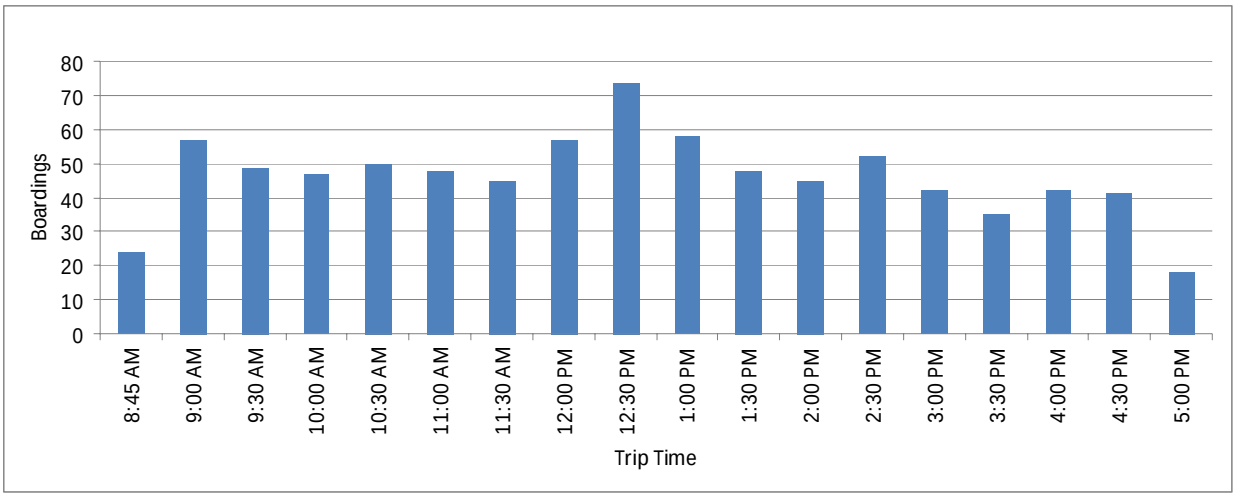
Figure E-3 shows the ridership trend throughout the day. The weekday time of day ridership profile of the regular route network shows a generally flat ridership pattern with the exception the 6:30 AM and 7:00 AM and 3:00 PM and 4:30 PM, which correspond to common school and employment trip times. The first morning trip and last trip of the day have significantly lower ridership, which is a common pattern with any transit system and does not necessarily require attention.

Figure E-3: Metro Ride Regular Route Weekday Ridership by Time of Day



The Saturday time of day ridership profile (Figure E-4) peaks during the midday (12:30 PM) and otherwise fluctuates through the rest of the day with the first and last trips having the lowest ridership.

Figure E-4: Metro Ride Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



Ridership Activity by Stop

From the information collected during the onboard ridership counts, maps are created to show the average daily ridership activity by stop for both weekdays and Saturdays. Stops with no daily activity observed are not shown on the maps. Figure E-5 shows weekday passenger activity by stop. Stops with the highest daily passenger activities are located at the downtown Transit Center, Northcentral Technical College, North Central Health Care Facilities, Wausau West High School, Shopko (both Wausau and Rothschild), and Sturgeon Bluff.

The downtown core area of the City of Wausau has strong ridership throughout. However, there are also sections of routes with very limited ridership, for example the northern section of Route H, the southern section of Route K, the southern end of Route C, and the western section of Route J.

Figure E-6 depicts the Saturday ridership activity by stop. Saturday ridership is much lower than weekday ridership. Saturday ridership is highest at the Transit Center, Shopko (both Wausau and Rothschild), and North Central Health Care Facilities. Most of the core downtown area has ridership, but many of the terminal ends of routes have extremely limited ridership.

Figure E-5: Weekday Passenger Activity by Stop

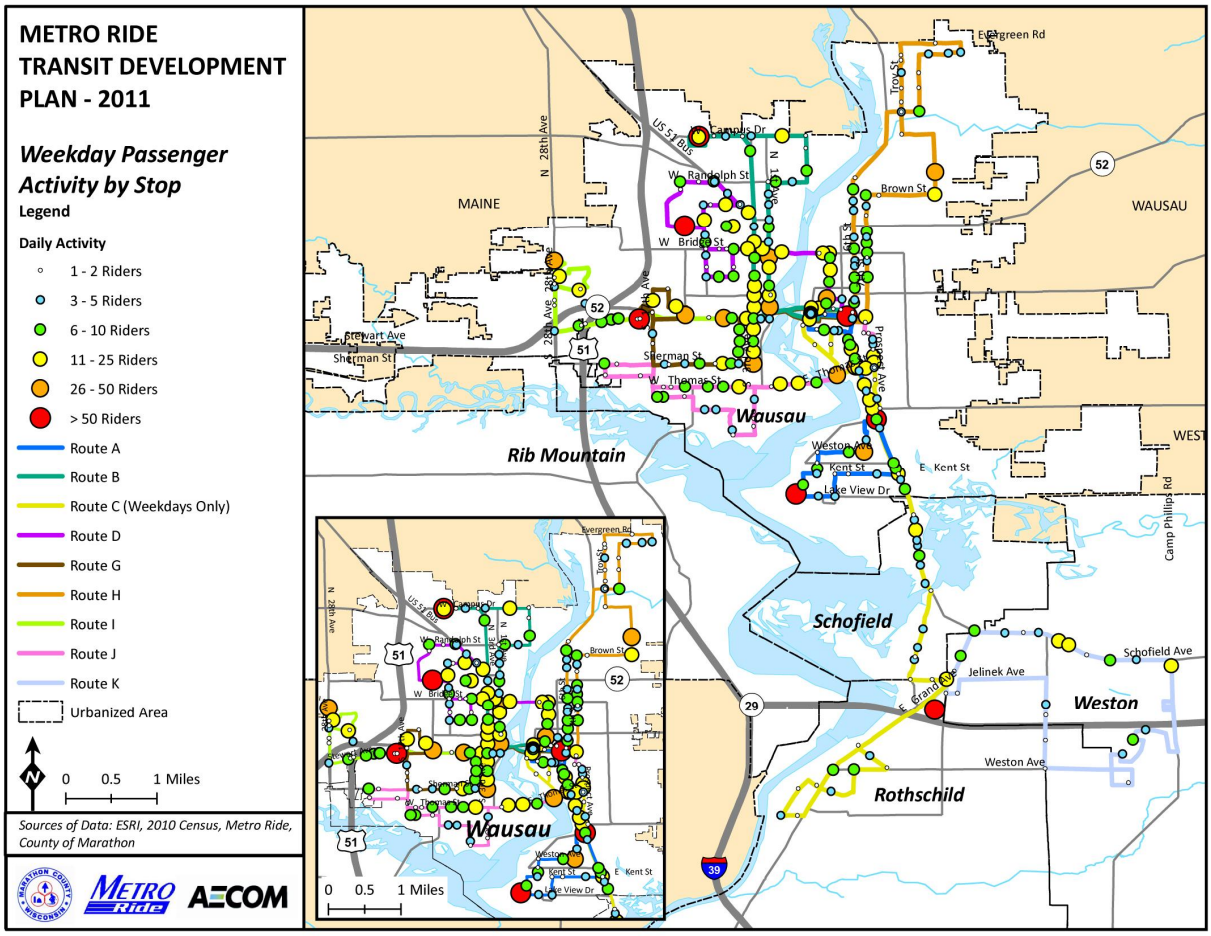
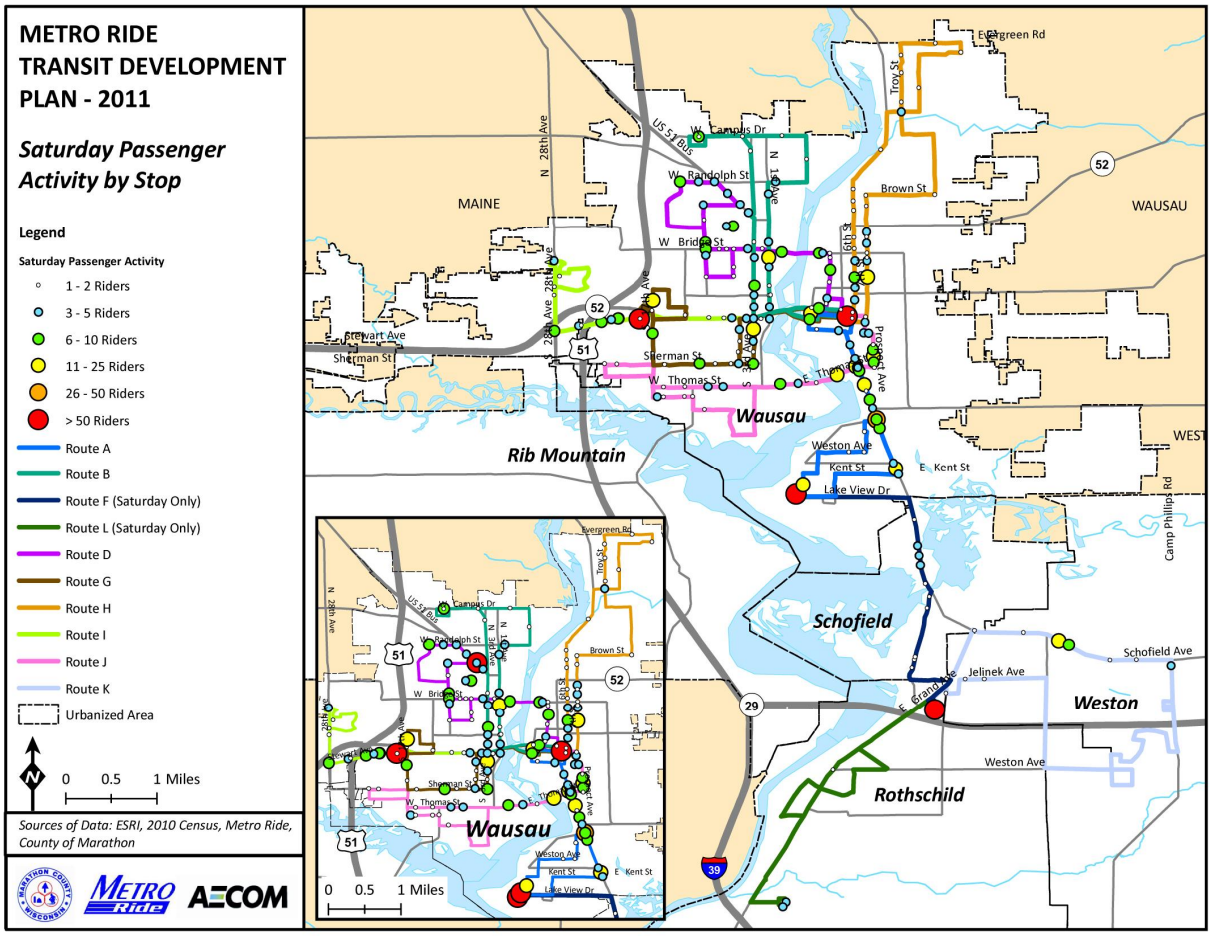


Figure E-6: Saturday Passenger Activity by Stop



This analysis of ridership activity by stop sets up the discussion of individual routes that follows.

Route Issues and Opportunities

The following section provides an overview of the individual fixed routes that run all of the service day. This section includes data collected for each route from the route diagnostics section and the ridership counts taken for this project. This section compares the performance of each route to the standards identified in this chapter. The routes are reviewed in alphabetical order and not by the rankings presented above.

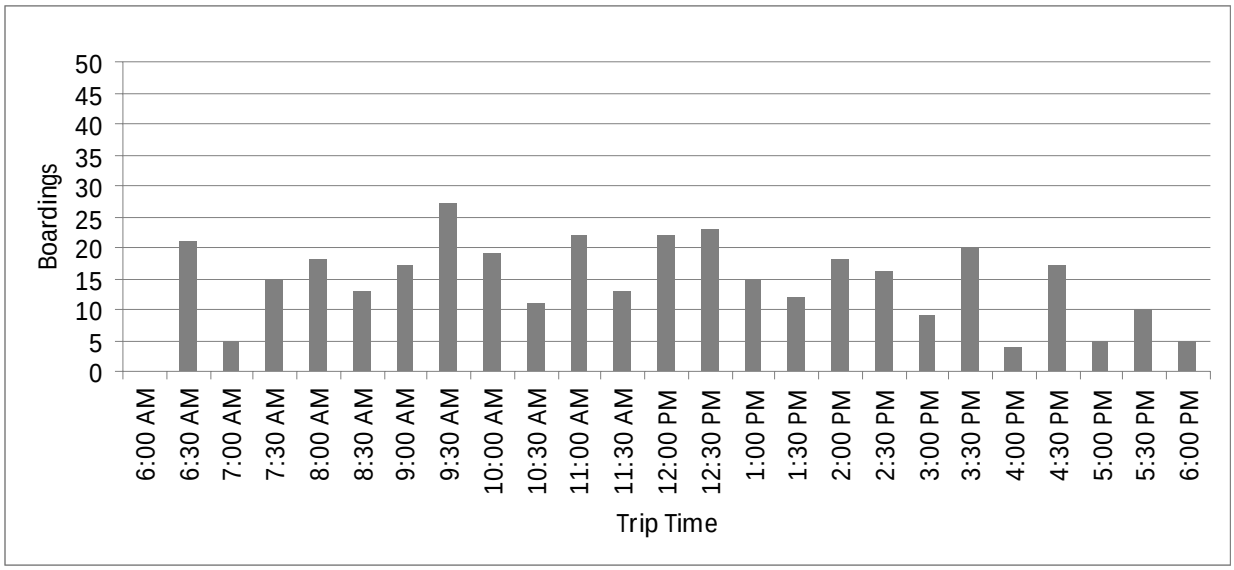
Route A – Route A is a solid route, ranking second in the system on weekdays and first on Saturdays. It provides service to The North Central Health Care Facilities campus, senior housing, and other key trip generators along Grand Avenue. This route has a 30 minute headway all day on weekdays and Saturdays. Table E-10 presents the indicators and operating statistics for this route.

Table E-10: Route A Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	357	203
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	161	116
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$214	$122
Passengers per Mile	2.21	1.75
Passengers per Hour	29.14	23.20
Cost per Mile	$5.44	$5.41
Cost per Passenger	$2.46	$3.09
Subsidy per Passenger	$1.86	$2.49
Farebox Recovery	24.4%	19.4%
Cumulative Rank Score	6	3
Rank	2	1

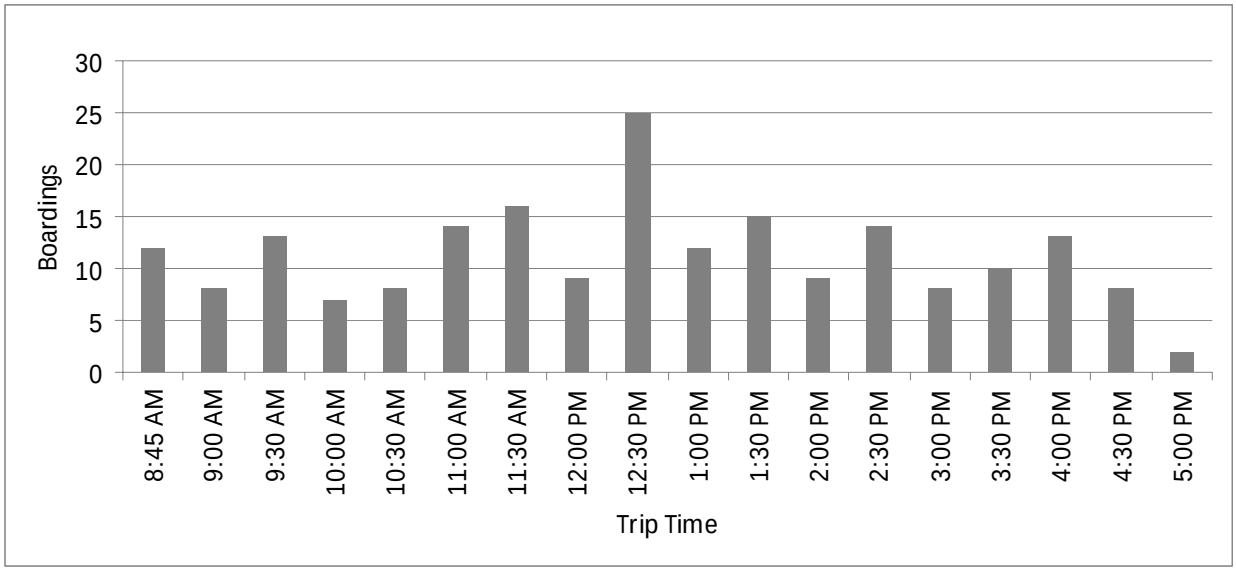
Figure E-7 presents the weekday time of day ridership profile for Route A, while the Saturday time of day profile for this route is presented in Figure E-8. Peak period ridership is not much higher than midday ridership on this route. The round trip that carries the most passengers is the 9:30 AM trip which recorded 27 boardings during the survey period. The first trip of the day has the lowest ridership (no riders). Average weekday loads per trip generally run between 10 and 15 passengers, and overall there are no long periods of low utilization. Route C takes some load off of Route A on Grand Avenue north of Kent Street, but not in significant numbers according to the Route C on/off profile.

Figure E-7: Route A Weekday Ridership by Time of Day



On Saturdays the ridership pattern is pretty consistent all day, with all trips averaging around 11 passengers per trip. The roundtrip with the highest ridership is the 12:30 PM trip with 25 boardings. This Saturday ridership profile is an improvement over the 2005 ridership profile for Route A, which averaged 5 or fewer boardings per trip. One possible reason for this improvement in Route A on Saturdays is that Route C no longer operates on Saturdays.

Figure E-8: Route A Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



As with all routes, most of the boarding and alighting activity on this route occurs at the Downtown Transit Center. Other stop locations that had significant (over 20 boardings or alightings on weekdays) boarding and alighting activity during the survey period include the intersection of Grand Avenue and Sturgeon Eddy and the North Central Health Care facilities. There was activity along all segments of the route with many stops having modest levels of activity. In-bound activity on Grand was a bit lower than the outbound activity, likely due to the use of Route C along the corridor for inbound trips. Figure E-9 presents the weekday ridership activity. Saturday boarding and alighting activity is presented on Figure E-10. Ridership activity is highest on Saturdays at the same stops as the weekdays.

Figure E-9: Route A Weekday On/Off Activity

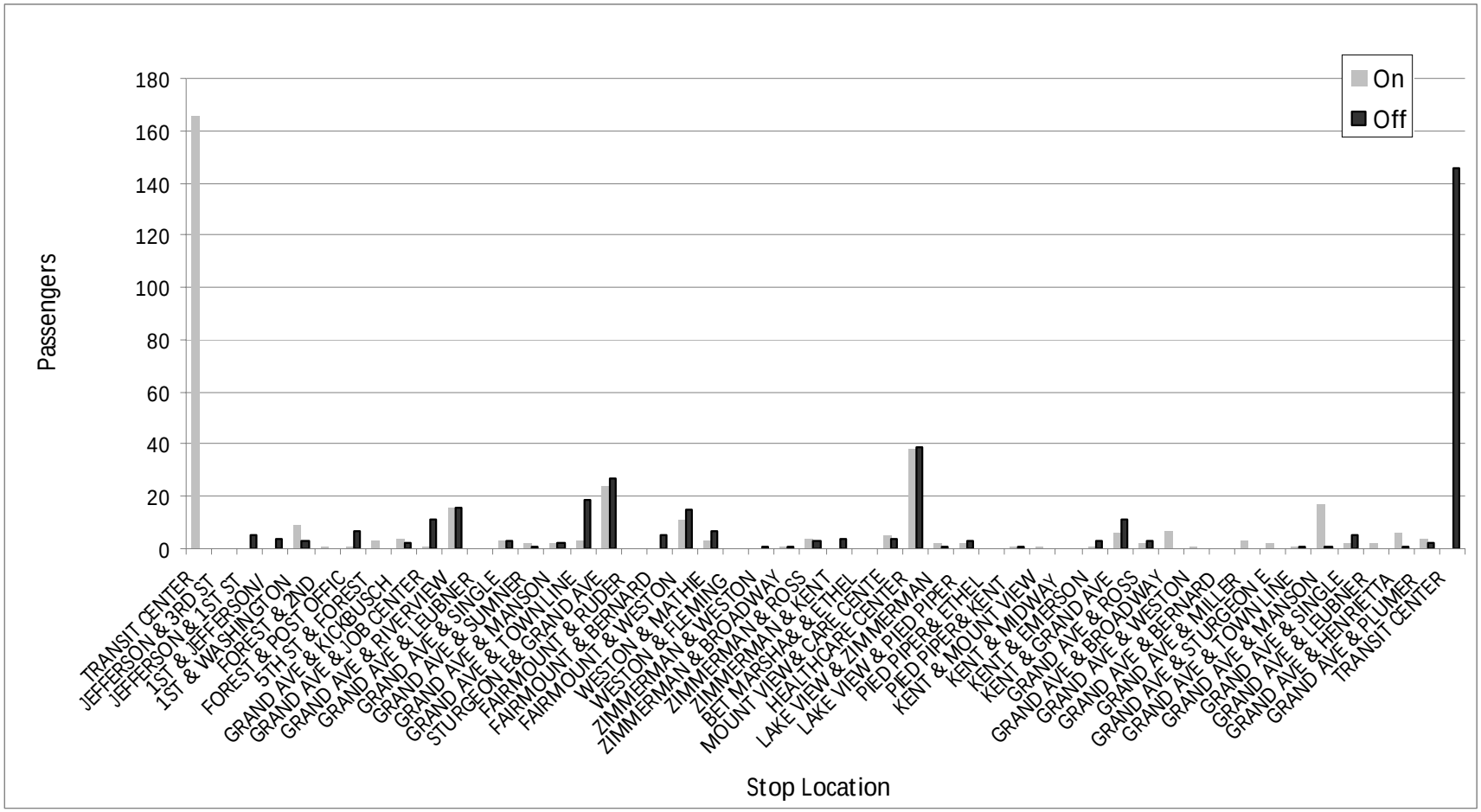
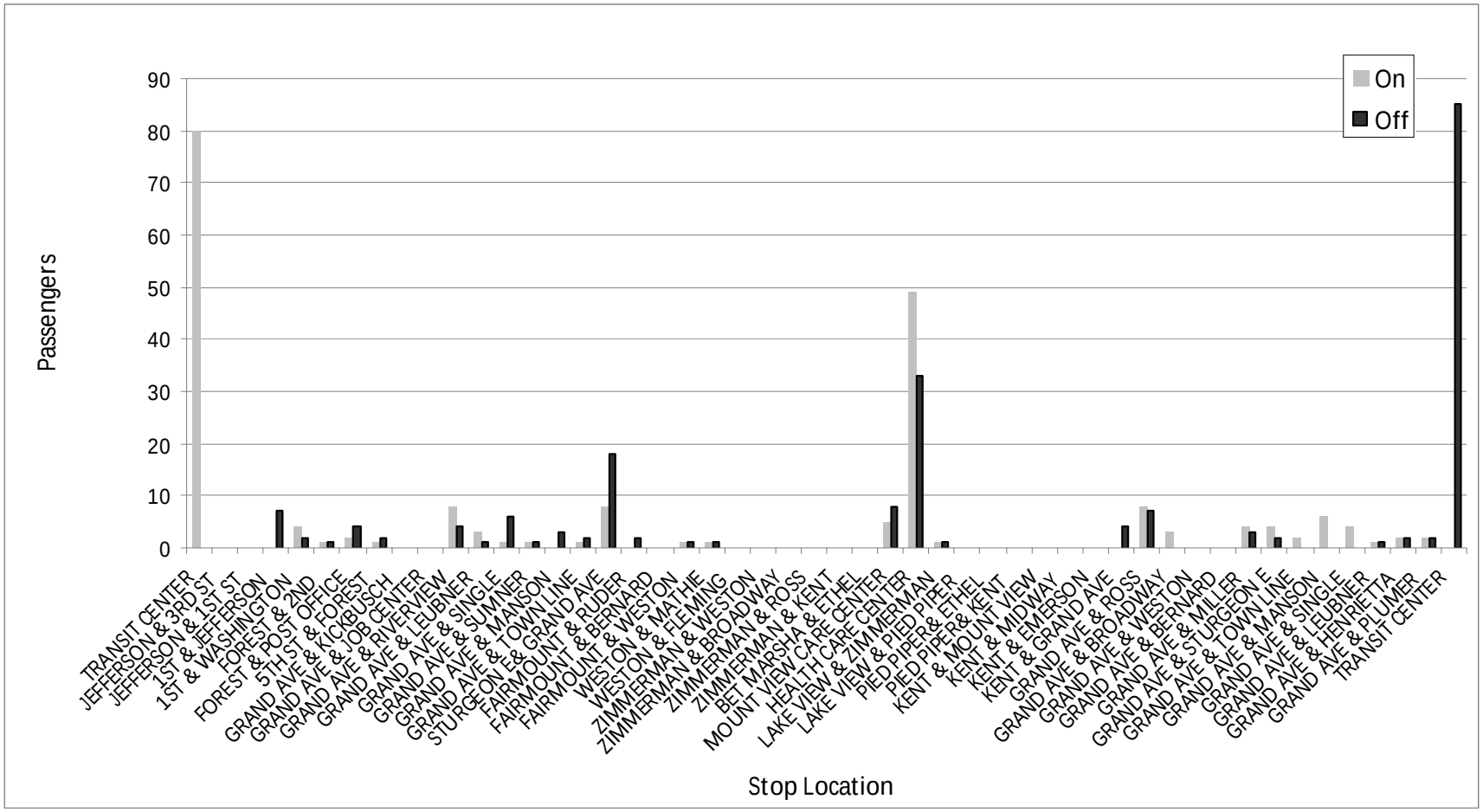


Figure E-10: Route A Saturday On/Off Activity



The observed average running time on weekdays was 27.4 minutes while the average running time on Saturdays was 27.1 minutes, which makes the 30 minute scheduled time comfortable to operate.

Overall, Route A has a well defined service area with some overlap on Grand Avenue with Route C, consistent ridership throughout the day on weekdays and Saturdays, activity spread throughout the route, and appropriate running times.

Route B – Route B is a very strong weekday route, but only a modest performer on Saturdays. Clearly, one reason for the difference is that this route serves provides service to Northcentral Technical College, a commuter campus, as well as to other public schools within Wausau. This route operates with a 30 minute headway all day on weekdays and Saturdays. Table E-11 presents statistics and indicators for Route B.

Table E-11: Route B Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	382	90
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	198	142
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$229	$54
Passengers per Mile	1.93	0.63
Passengers per Hour	31.18	10.29
Cost per Mile	$4.42	$4.40
Cost per Passenger	$2.30	$6.96
Subsidy per Passenger	$1.70	$6.36
Farebox Recovery	26.1%	8.6%
Cumulative Rank Score	3	9
Rank	1	3

Time of day ridership for Route B is presented on Figure E-11 for weekdays and Figure E-12 for Saturdays. Figure E-8 shows steady ridership all day with a strong midday performance. Most trips carry in excess of 10 passengers, with 15 trips carrying at least 15 passengers. Only the first trip has a very low ridership level. On Saturdays ridership is very low and only had one trip (3:00 PM) with 10 passengers. Many trips carried fewer than 5 passengers. The influence of the Community College is evident in the numbers and in the difference in the weekday and Saturday on/off ridership patterns. The ridership profile on weekdays for Route B has improved since the previous study. The Saturday profile has remained about the same.

Figure E-11: Route B Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

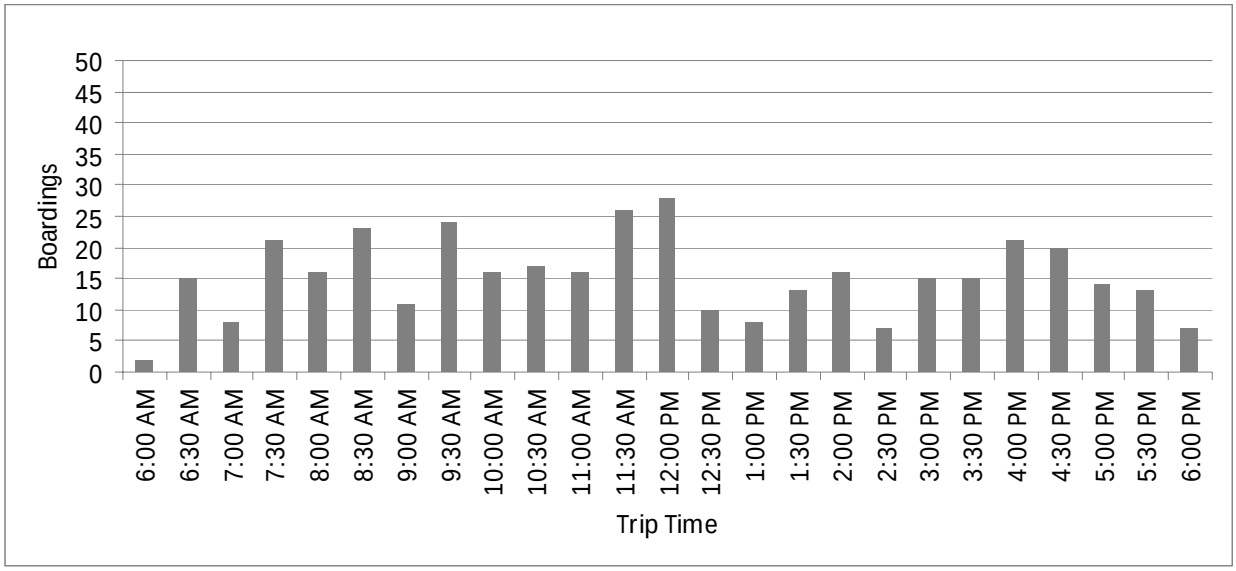


Figure E-12: Route B Saturday Ridership by Time of Day

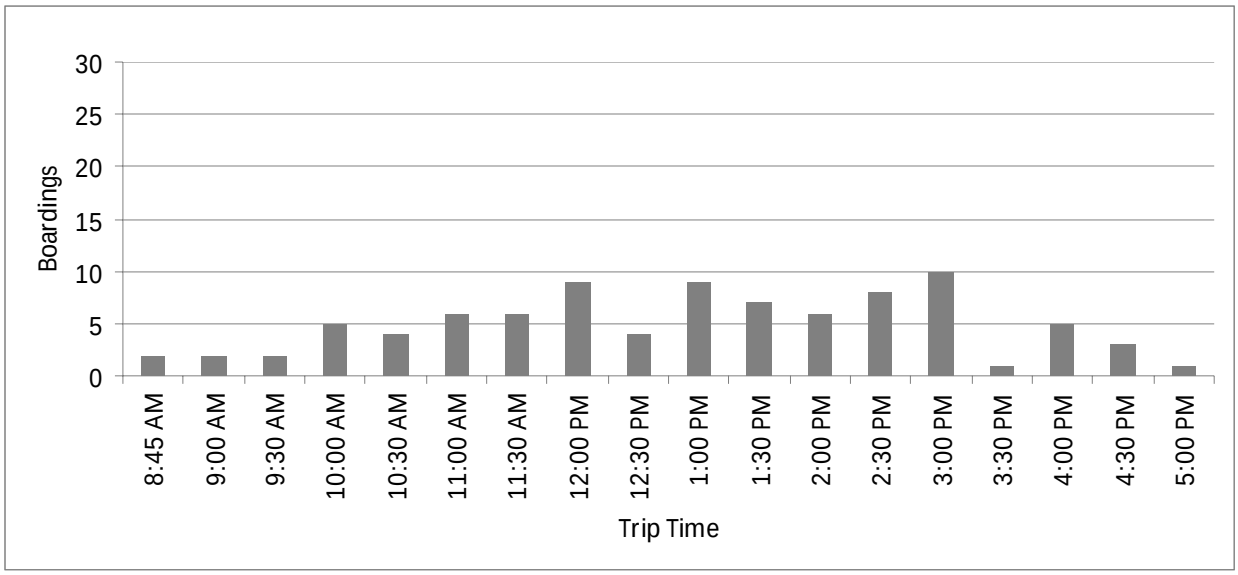


Figure E-13 shows the bus stop outside of downtown that has a solid amount of boarding and alighting activity on weekdays is at North Central Technical College. The area of this route that shows little boarding and alighting activity is along Randolph Street, Burek Avenue, portions of East Campus Drive. On Saturdays, Route B sees sporadic boarding and alighting activity at most stops as shown on Figure E-14 with the highest activity at 1st Avenue and Oak Street.

Route B has an observed average roundtrip running time of 30.6 minutes on weekdays and 27.6 minutes on Saturdays. Running times through the college can be unpredictable, which is obvious from the difference in running times Saturdays when college ridership is negligible compared to weekdays.

Overall, Route B is a strong weekday route anchored by the Northcentral Technical College campus which performs poorly on Saturdays. Ridership northbound along 1st Avenue and southbound along 3rd Avenue is solid on weekdays and provides the majority of the Saturday activity.

Figure E-13: Route B Weekday On/Off Activity

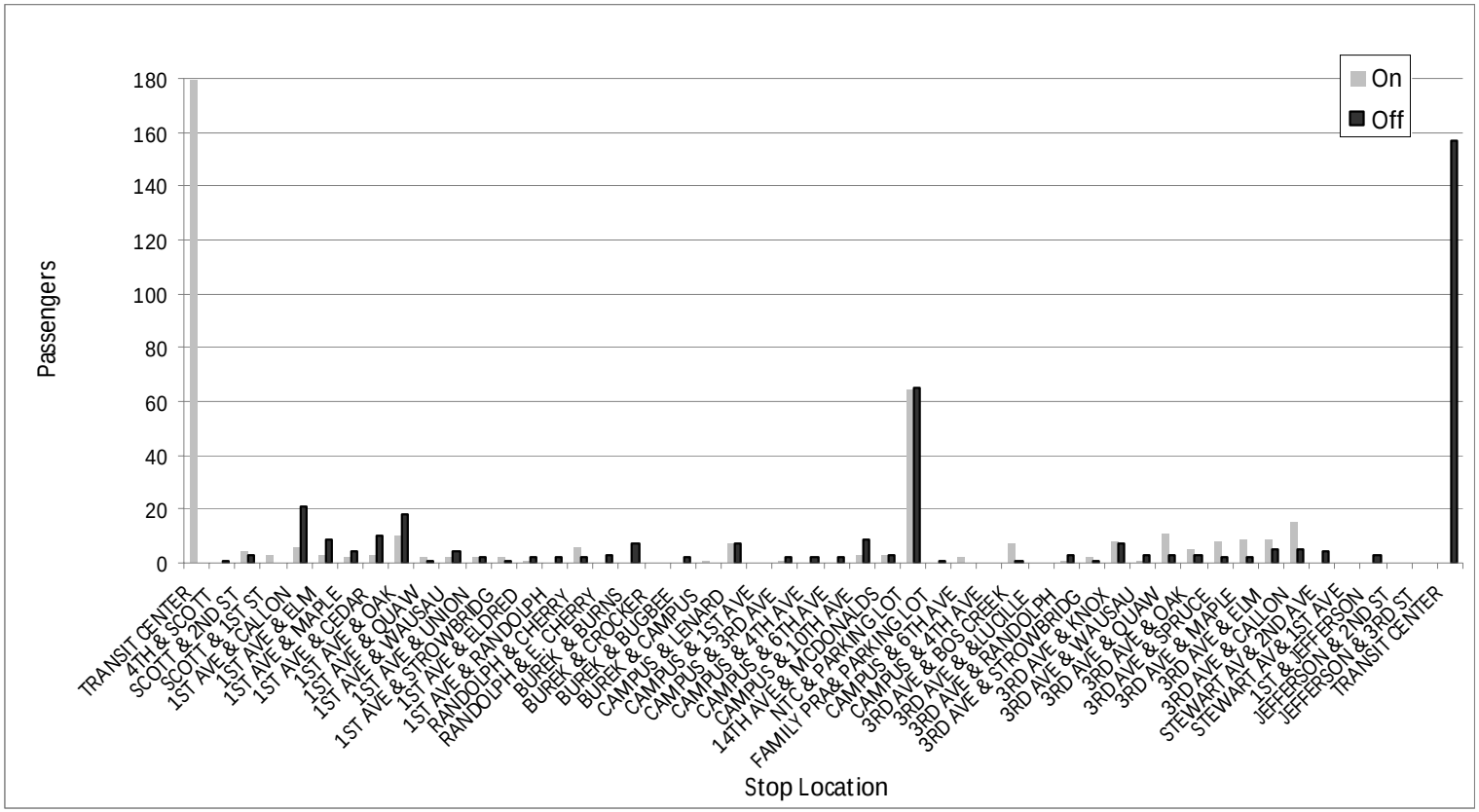
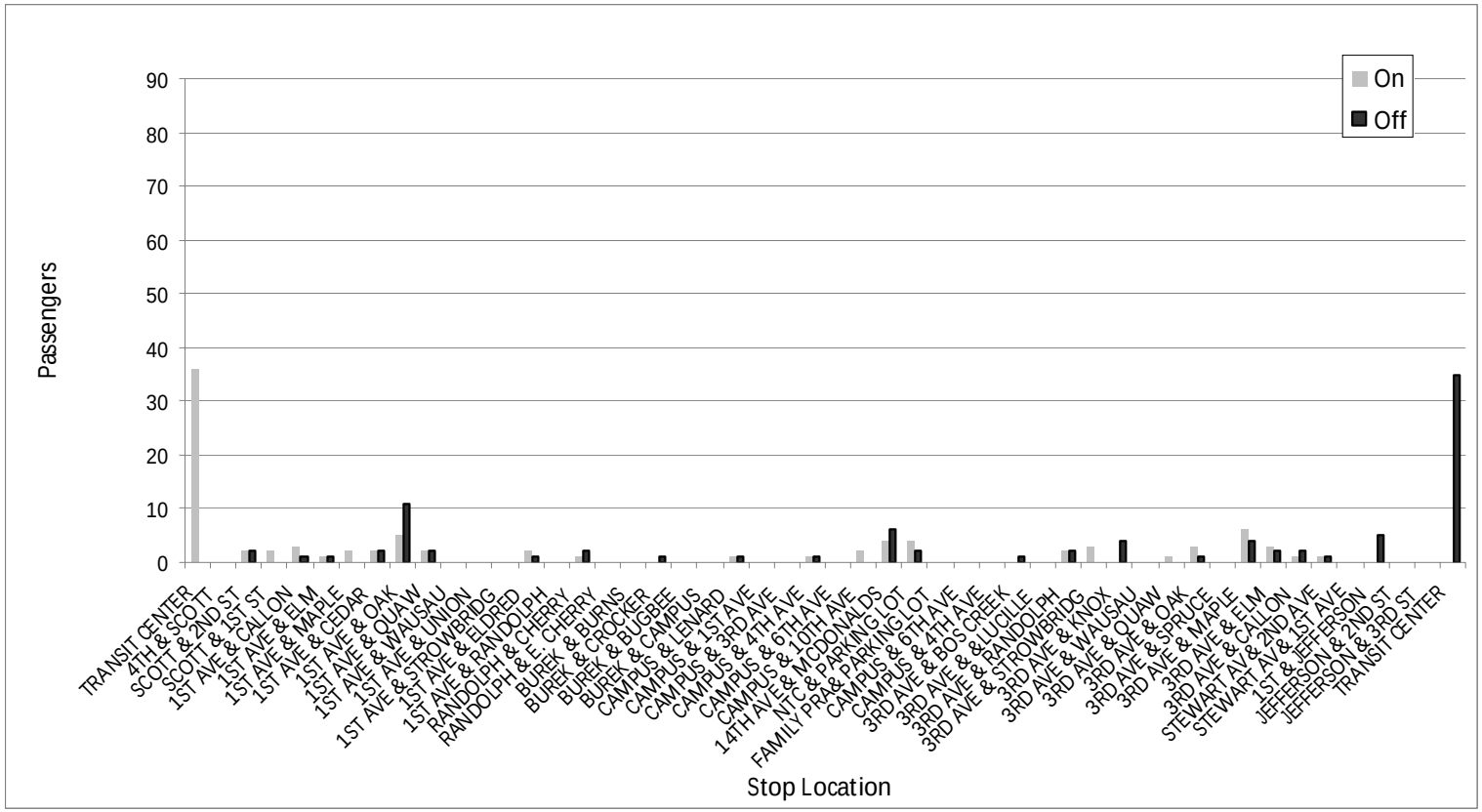


Figure E-14: Route B Saturday On/Off Activity



Route C – Route C performance has mixed results. Table E-12 presents the weekday operating statistics and indicators for Route C. While not strong with regard to passengers per mile, the route does produce 18.24 passengers per hour, which, while ranking only 8th in the system, is solid with respect to the system average of 20.88. The discrepancy is because Route C operates at a higher speed than the others in the system – 16.2 miles per hour – as it links Wausau with the surrounding communities using principally major arterial roadways. The route connects Rothschild and Schofield to downtown Wausau, and services the Grand Avenue corridor and Business Highway 51, providing links to many significant generators. From the previous study, Route C no longer operates on Saturdays; it has been replaced by a combination of Routes F and L.

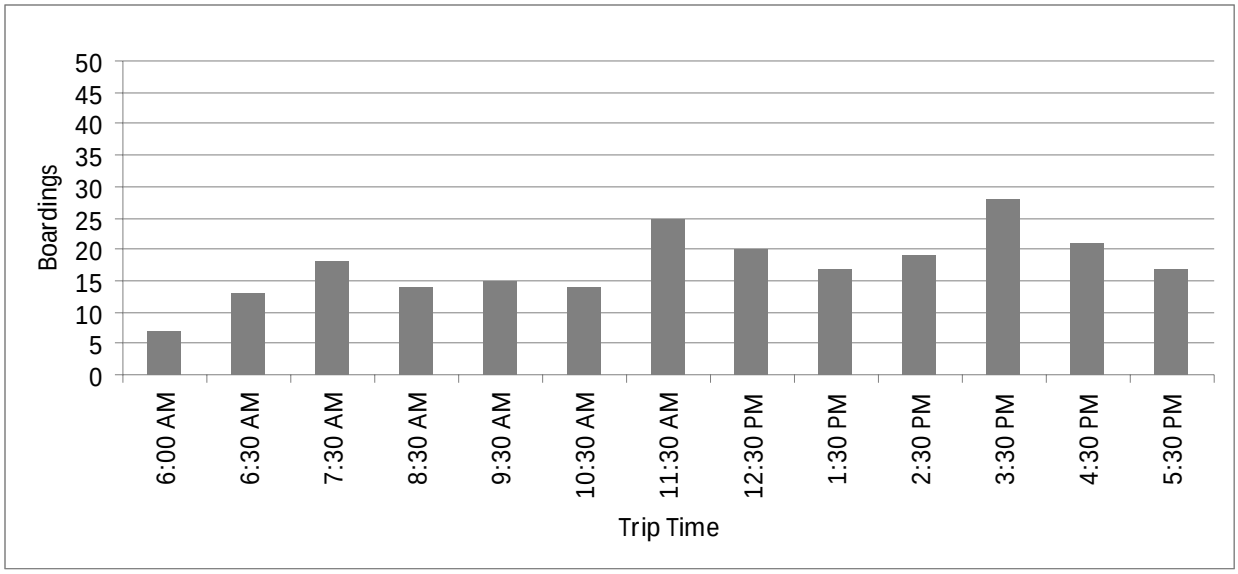
Table E-12: Route C Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday
Average Daily Ridership	228
Daily Revenue Hours	12.5
Daily Revenue Miles	209
Daily Operating Cost	$895
Daily Farebox Revenue	$137
Passengers per Mile	1.09
Passengers per Hour	18.24
Cost per Mile	$4.28
Cost per Passenger	$3.93
Subsidy per Passenger	$3.33
Farebox Recovery	15.3%
Cumulative Rank Score	24
Rank	8

Another difference which influences ridership is that Route C is the only route that operates on 60 minute headways at all times, which keeps its resource utilization (number of hours and miles of service per day) within the same range as all other routes in the system, albeit at a lower level of service. How this influences ridership and operating cost and efficiency will be reviewed as options are developed and reviewed and discussed.

The time of day ridership profile for Route C is presented on Figure E-15 for weekday ridership. The weekday ridership profile shows no morning or late afternoon peaking, but rather a route dominated by midday ridership between 11:30 AM and 3:30 PM. This is characteristic of a 60 minute headway, which limits peak AM and PM work and school trip opportunities, and instead functions best as a service for midday shopping, medical, recreational, and other non-work trips.

Figure E-15: Route C Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

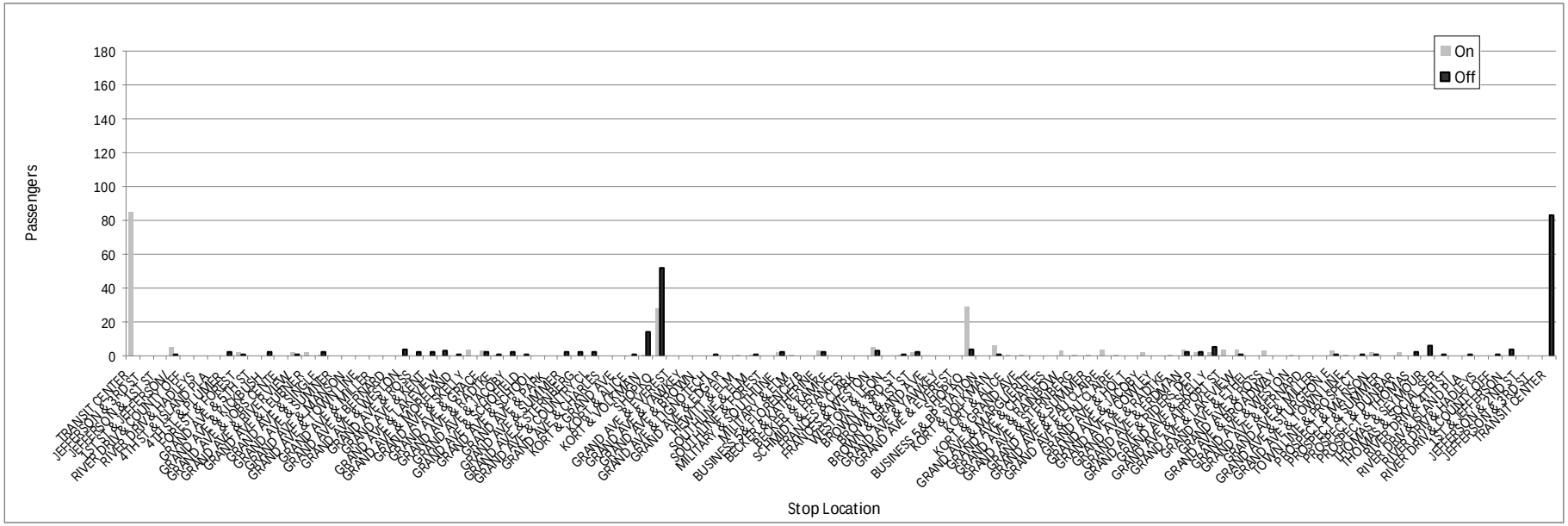


The boarding and alighting activity by stop for this route are constant albeit low with no truly weak segments. Figure E-16 presents the boarding and alighting profile for Route C on weekdays and shows that most stops do generate ridership, with the Shopko stop and the Transit Center as particularly busy stops.

The observed average roundtrip on weekdays is 59.8 minutes, which is tight, but the observations showed that Route C was never more than 1 minute late. Note that the route enters the Shopko Shopping Center in both directions.

Route C has both strengths and weaknesses. It provides a critical service along Grand Avenue in Wausau as well as the only weekday linkage to Schofield and Rothschild. It links many residents to key shopping areas along the route, and provides two way service to the Riverview Towers East and Sturgeon Bluff apartments. While tight, the running times seem acceptable. The future of this route is clearly tied to some of the major issues of this project, particularly the development of a new service to Rib Mountain, the questionable future for the existing service in Weston, and the Saturday service to Cedar Creek.

Figure E-16: Route C Weekday On/Off Activity



Route D – Route D is a solid weekday performer in the Metro Ride system in terms of its operating statistics and indicators. This is shown below on Table E-13, which shows that the route ranks third on weekdays and sixth on Saturdays. This route serves both Wausau West High School and Newman High School, while also providing service to a number of apartment complexes.

Table E-13: Route D Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	287	77
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	173	124
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$172	$46
Passengers per Mile	1.66	0.62
Passengers per Hour	23.43	8.80
Cost per Mile	$5.06	$5.04
Cost per Passenger	$3.06	$8.14
Subsidy per Passenger	$2.46	$7.54
Farebox Recovery	19.6%	7.4%
Cumulative Rank Score	9	18
Rank	3	6

Route D ridership is highly peaked on weekdays, with major spikes between 6:30 AM and 7:30 AM and after 3:00 PM. The passenger loads during the peaks exceed 15 passengers per trip(the morning peaks exceed 30 passengers), while the loads at all other times are below 10 passengers per trip, indicating an opportunity to review the off-peak headways. Peak ridership on Route D has increased since the previous study.

Route D has 30 minute service on Saturdays, which is a change from the previous study when it was interlined with the former Route E. Most Route D trips on Saturday carry 5 or fewer passengers with the highest number of passengers boarding in a single trip still under 10. Saturday service once again needs to be reviewed in light of this performance.

Figure E-17: Route D Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

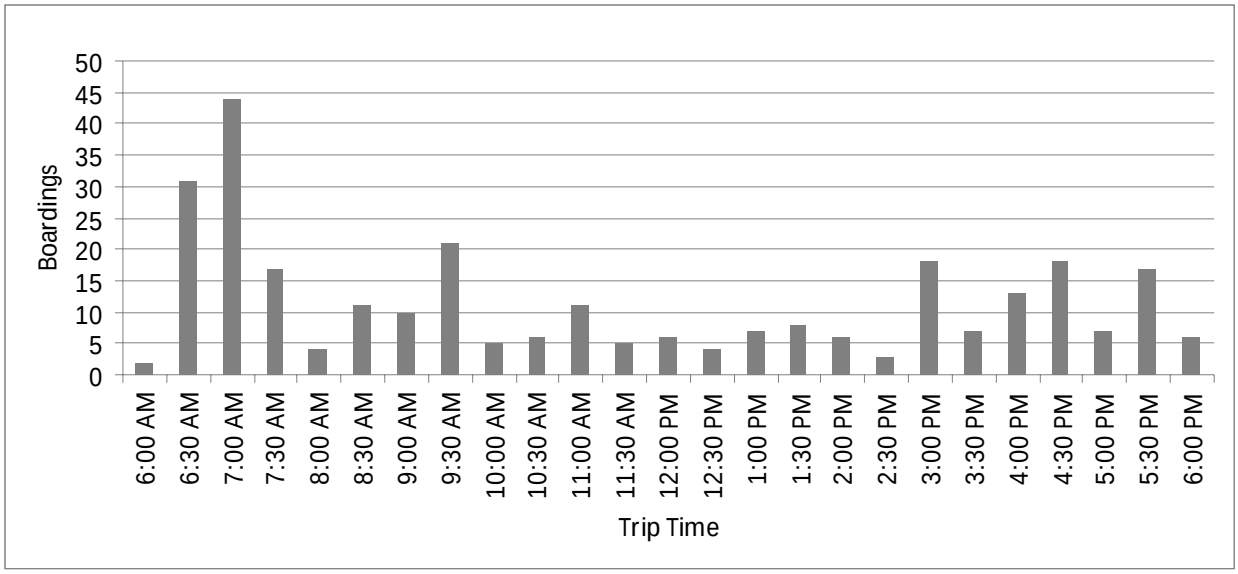
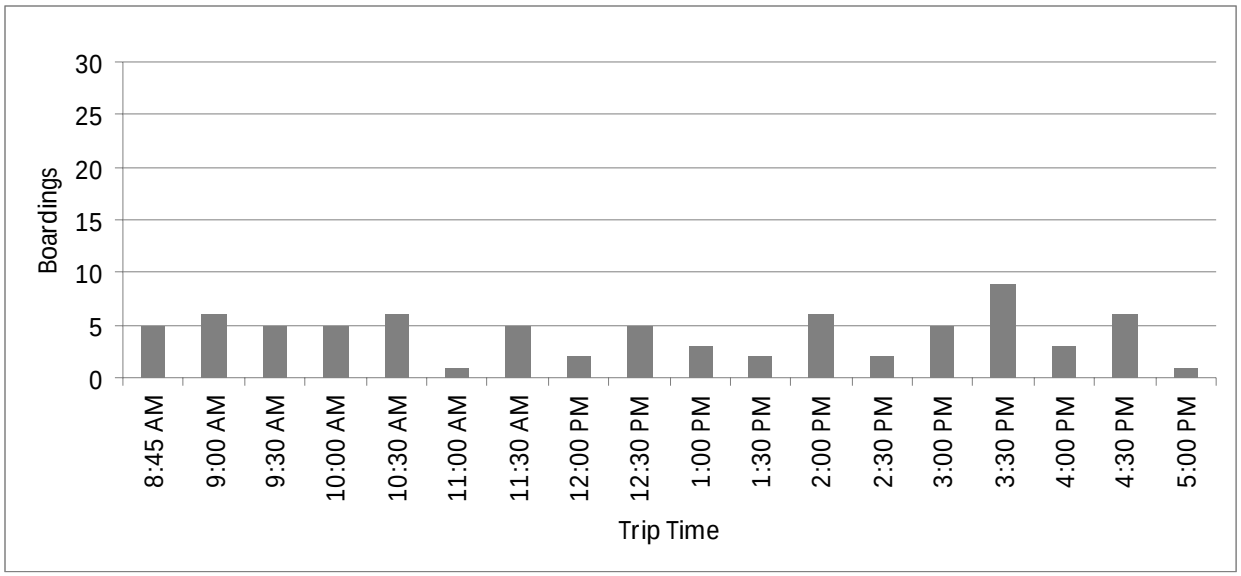


Figure E-18: Route D Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



Outside the downtown stop, the stop that has the highest boarding and alighting activity on weekdays is Wausau West High School. There is a weak ridership segment on this route on weekdays along Stevens Drive that needs to be reviewed. Figure E-20 presents the boarding/alighting profile for this route on Saturdays. The Saturday profile shows that the strongest segments of this route are along 3rd Street and Bridge Street, with very little activity occurring on other segments and none near West Wausau High School.

The observed average roundtrip travel time for this route is 28.8 minutes on weekdays and 28.2 minutes on Saturdays.

Overall, Route D is a particularly good weekday route because it provides service to two high schools as well as apartment complexes along Merrill Avenue and Strowbridge Drive. Saturday ridership is very low.

Figure E-19: Route D Weekday On/Off Activity

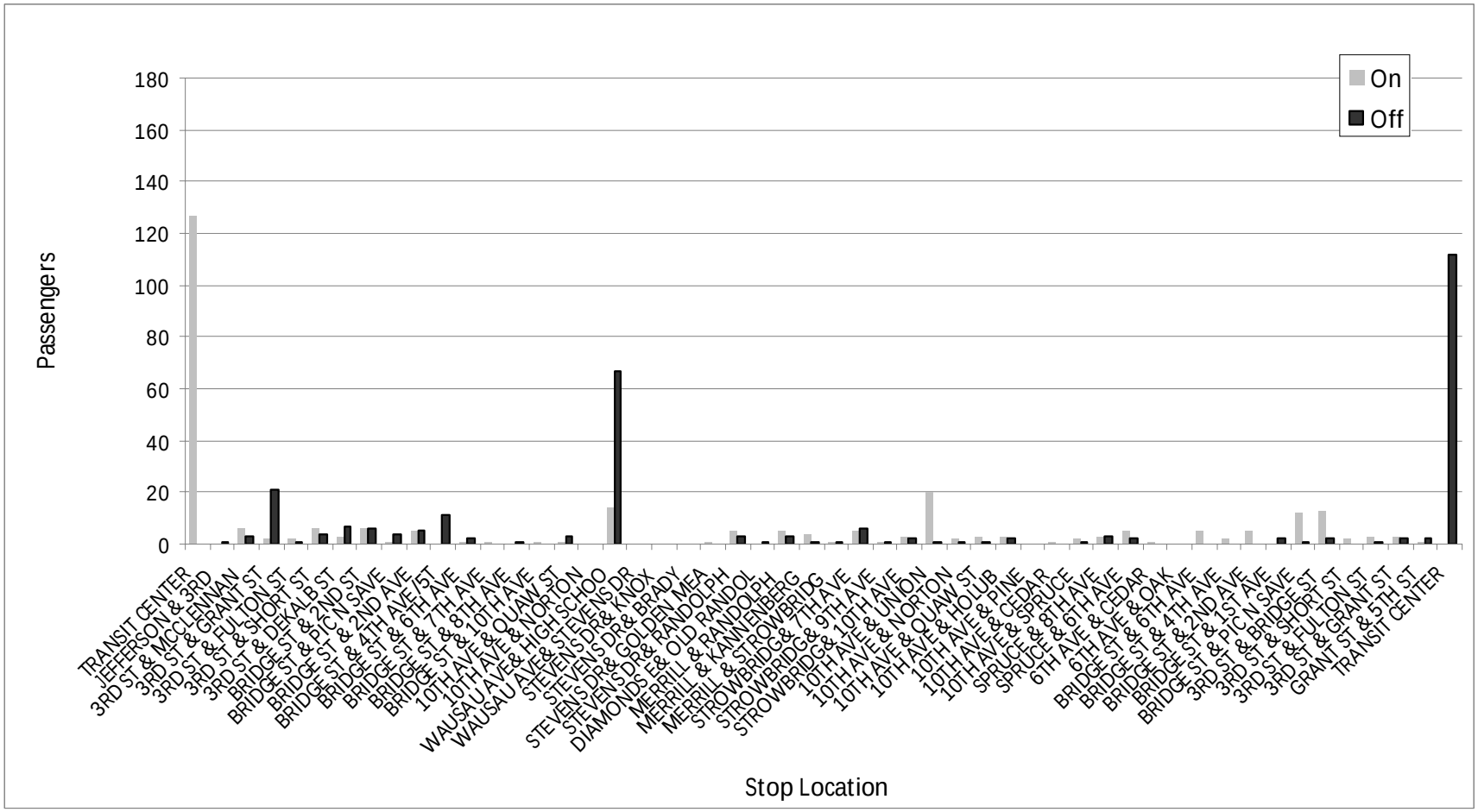
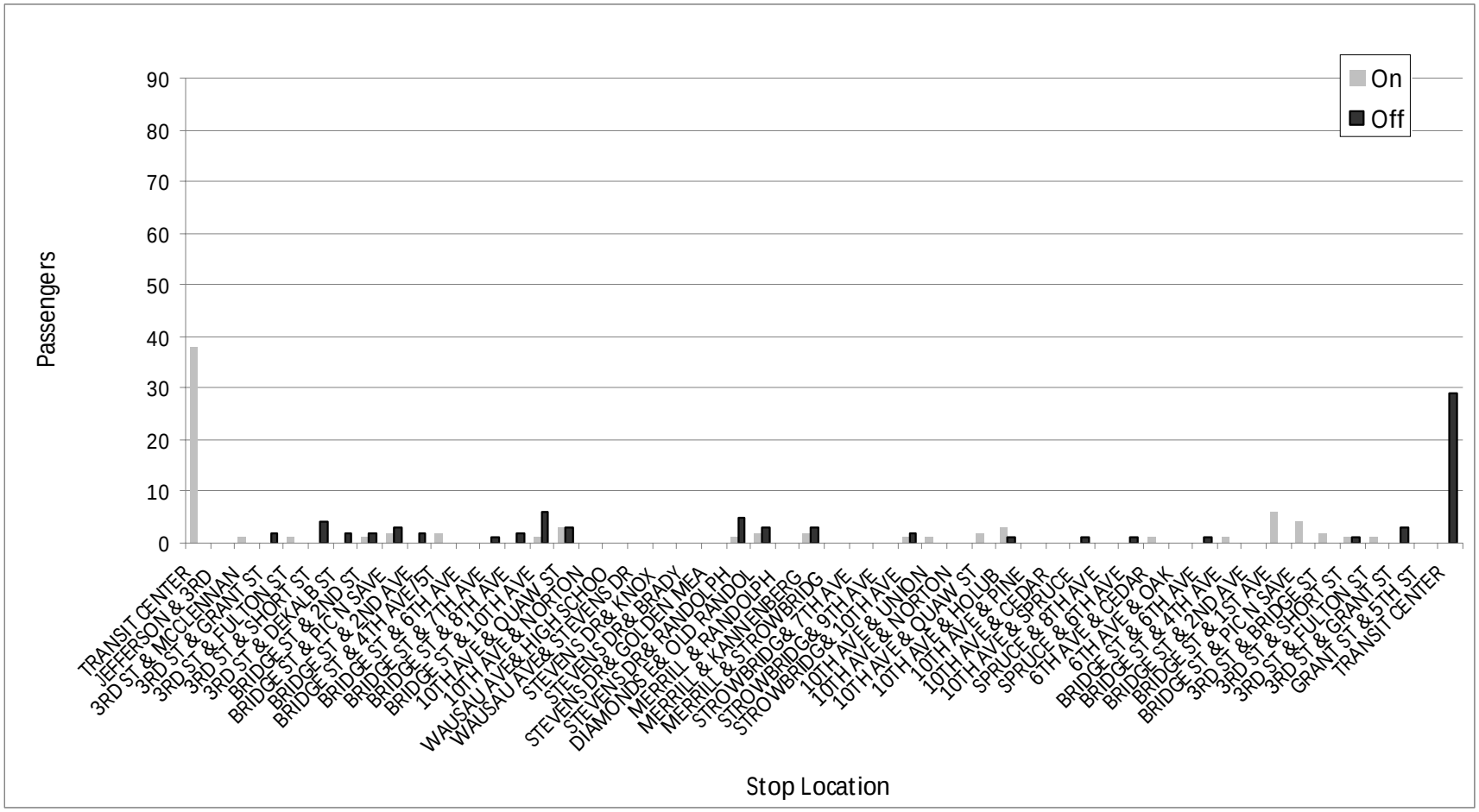


Figure E-20: Route D Saturday On/Off Activity



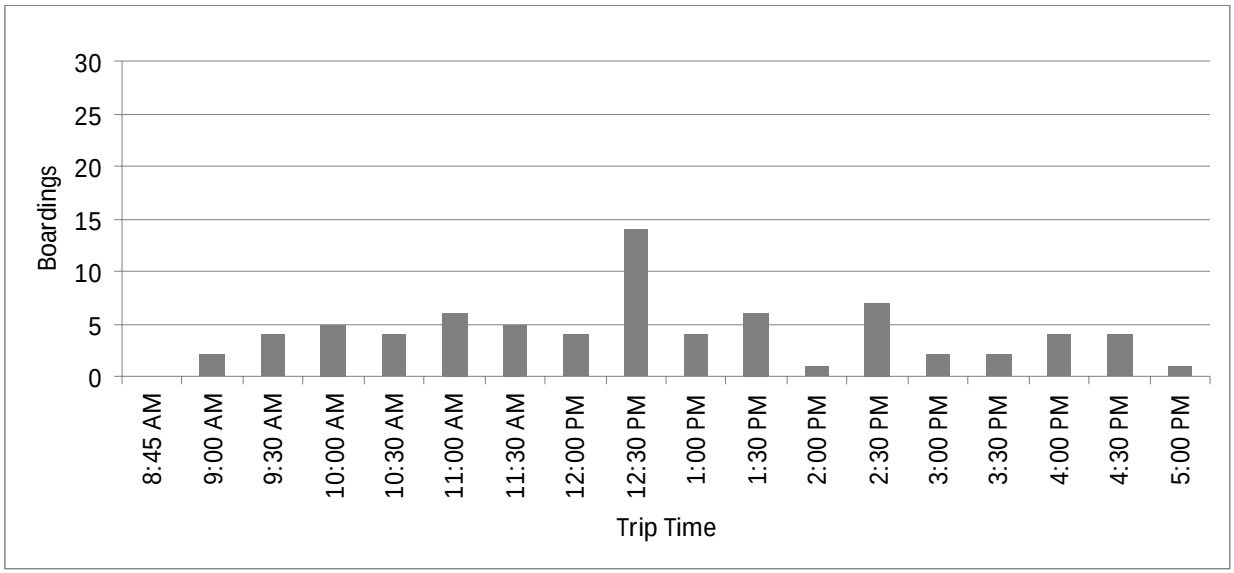
Route F – Route F operates on 30 minute headways on Saturdays only. Daily operating statistics and indicators are presented in Table E-14. Route F is ranked 5th in the system on Saturdays. Route F is a new route since the previous study and replaces a section of Route C, which no longer operates on Saturdays. The remainder of Route C is operated on Route L, which also extends the service to Cedar Creek on Saturdays only.

Table E-14: Route F Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	75
Daily Revenue Hours	8.5
Daily Revenue Miles	124
Daily Operating Cost	$609
Daily Farebox Revenue	$45
Passengers per Mile	0.60
Passengers per Hour	8.82
Cost per Mile	$4.89
Cost per Passenger	$8.11
Subsidy per Passenger	$7.51
Farebox Recovery	7.4%
Cumulative Rank Score	15
Rank	5

Time of day ridership trends for Route F is shown in Figure E-21 for Saturdays. The route averages only 4 riders per trip and the only trip with more than 10 passengers riding is the 12:30 PM trip with 14 riders.

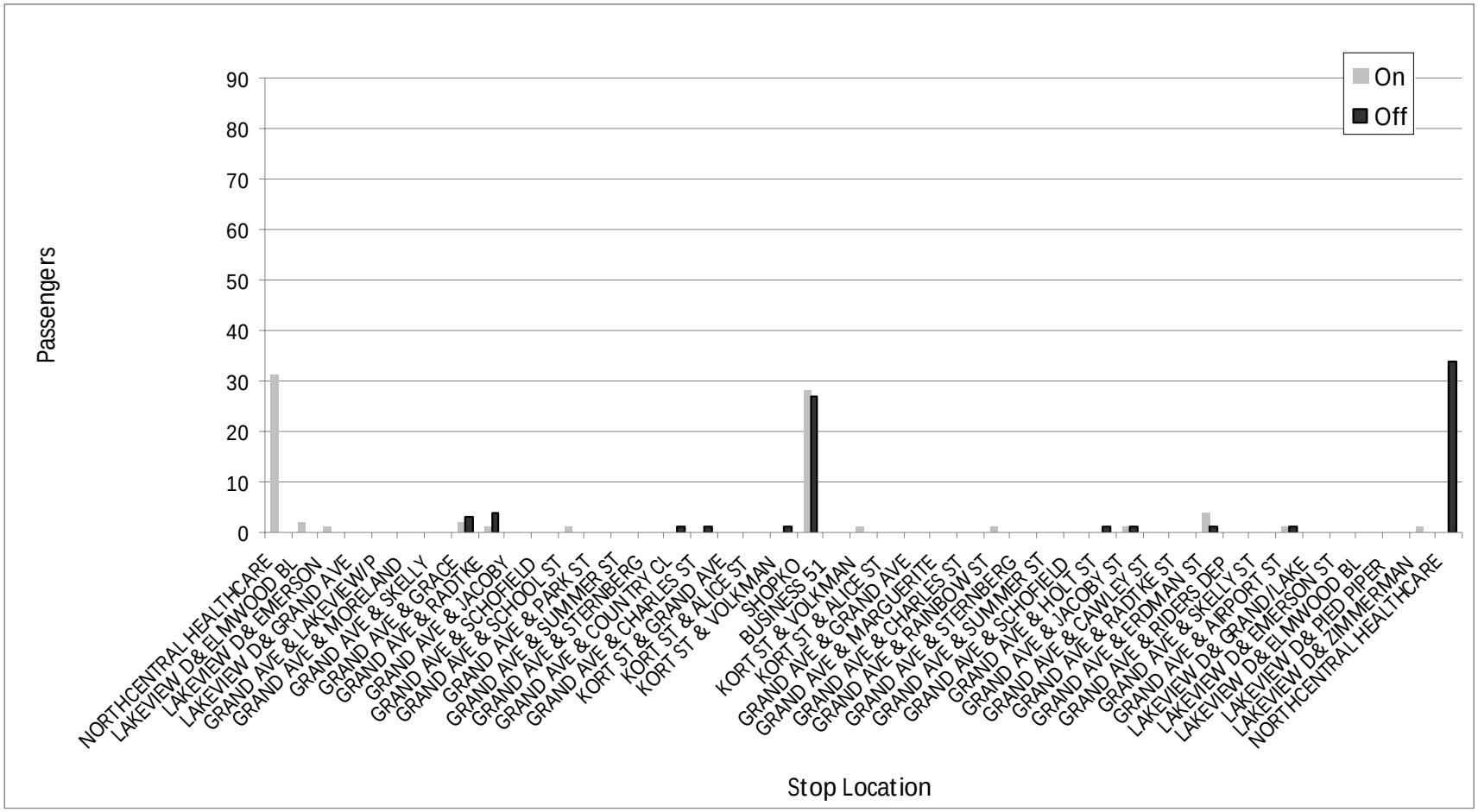
Figure E-21: Route F Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



The observed running time on Route F is exactly 30 minutes. While this is obviously tight, no trips observed were late.

Figure E-22 shows the stop-by-stop activity for Route F on Saturdays. Virtually all of the activity on the route happens at the Transit Center and Shopko. It appears that Wausau residents are using the F bus on Saturdays to go to Shopko and do their shopping, then return home to Wausau. Further, few riders live between the Transit Center and Shopko as ridership is extremely low between the major stops.

Figure E-22: Route F Saturday On/Off Activity



Route G – Route G is a strong Metro Ride route. This route serves major shopping destinations within the City and operates along Sherman Street and South 17th Avenue, where the route terminates at Shopko. Route G was modified after the previous study in conjunction with modifications to the I Route. During the previous study, Route G was the best performer in the Metro Ride system, but ridership has been shared with Route I, so Route G's indicators have been slightly reduced. Table E-15 presents the route statistics and indicators for Route G.

Table E-15: Route G Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	260	129
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	173	124
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$156	$77
Passengers per Mile	1.50	1.04
Passengers per Hour	21.22	14.74
Cost per Mile	$5.06	$5.04
Cost per Passenger	$3.37	$4.86
Subsidy per Passenger	$2.77	$4.26
Farebox Recovery	17.8%	12.4%
Cumulative Rank Score	12	6
Rank	4	2

Ridership along this route is strong throughout the day, but not on every trip. Trips with the highest numbers of passengers (20 boardings or more) occur in the morning – 6:30, 7:00, 9:00 and 11:00 AM. Route G averages 10 passengers per trip on weekdays.

Figure E-24 presents the Saturday ridership by time of day, which shows that ridership is steady throughout the day with between 5 and 10 boardings per trip. The trip with the highest number of boardings is the 9:00 AM trip, and is the only trip with more than 15 boardings. On Saturdays, Route G averages 7 passengers per trip.

The bus stop activity charts (Figures E-25 and E-26) show that the majority of activity outside the transit center occurs at Shopko, with a strong on/off profile generated along all but 17th Avenue and Sherman Street. This trend holds for both weekdays and Saturdays, with a more scattered profile on Saturdays. The 17th Avenue segment between Sherman Street and Stewart Avenue basically provides the best connection between the shopping areas and neighborhoods along West Sherman Street and does not suggest the need to redesign the route.

Figure E-23: Route G Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

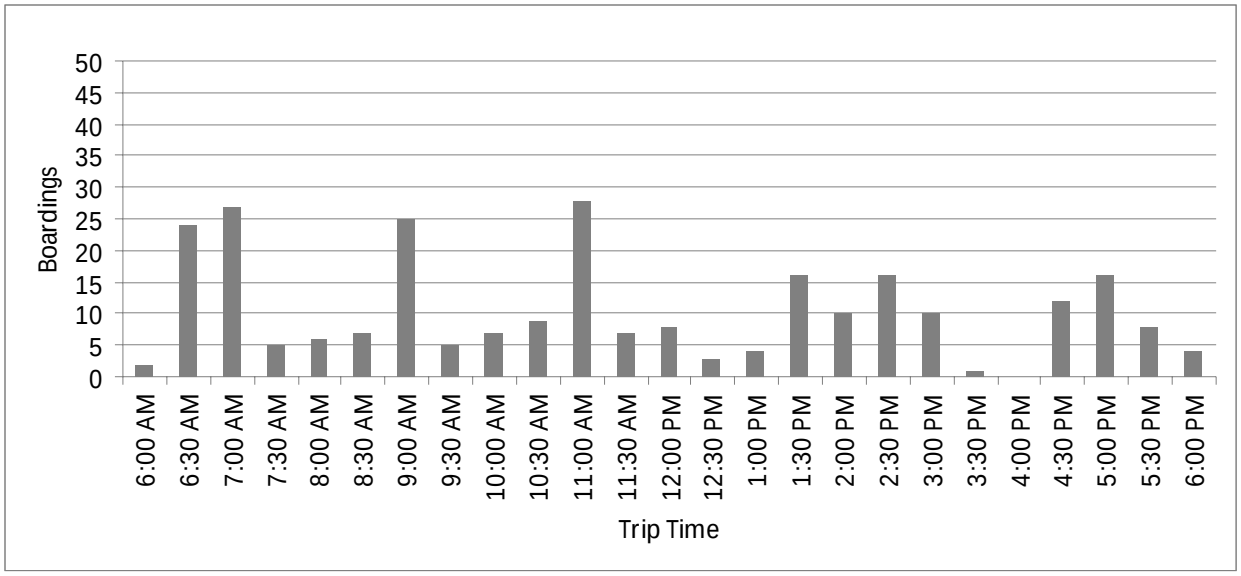
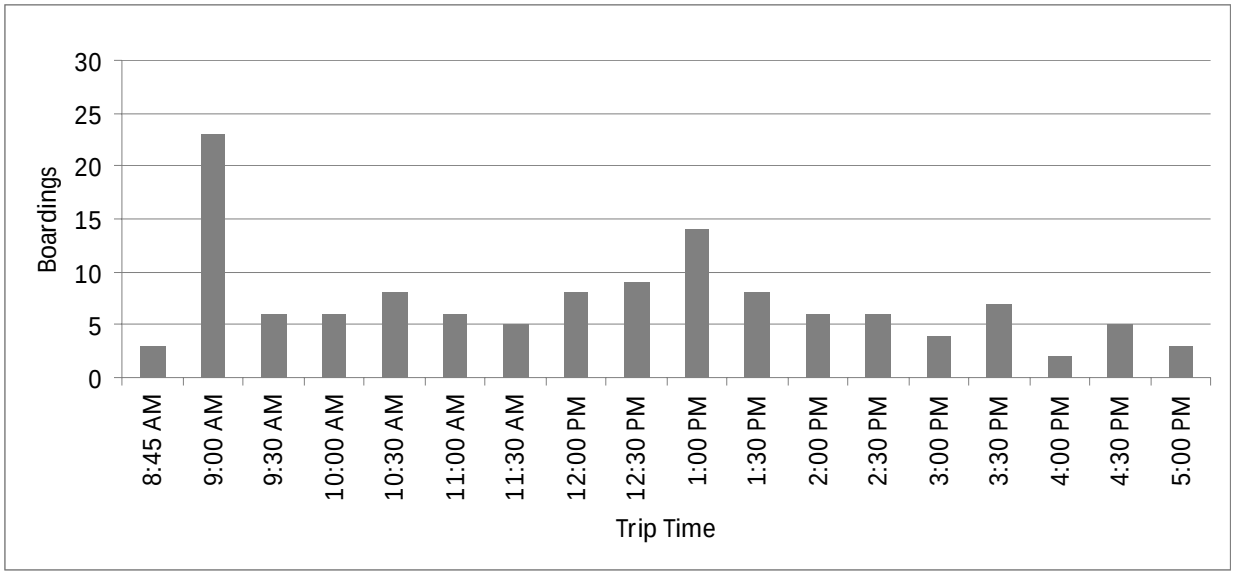


Figure E-24: Route G Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



This route provides all day 30 minute service on both weekdays and Saturdays. The observed average running time for this route was 28.8 minutes on weekdays and 28.4 minutes on Saturdays, generally sufficient for ensuring enough driver recovery time. Although during the mid-day period on weekdays, the Route was observed to be consistently operated over 30 minutes, probably due to lunchtime traffic. The rest of the day the route operates with sufficient recovery time on weekdays and all day on Saturdays.

Figure E-25: Route G Weekday On/Off Activity

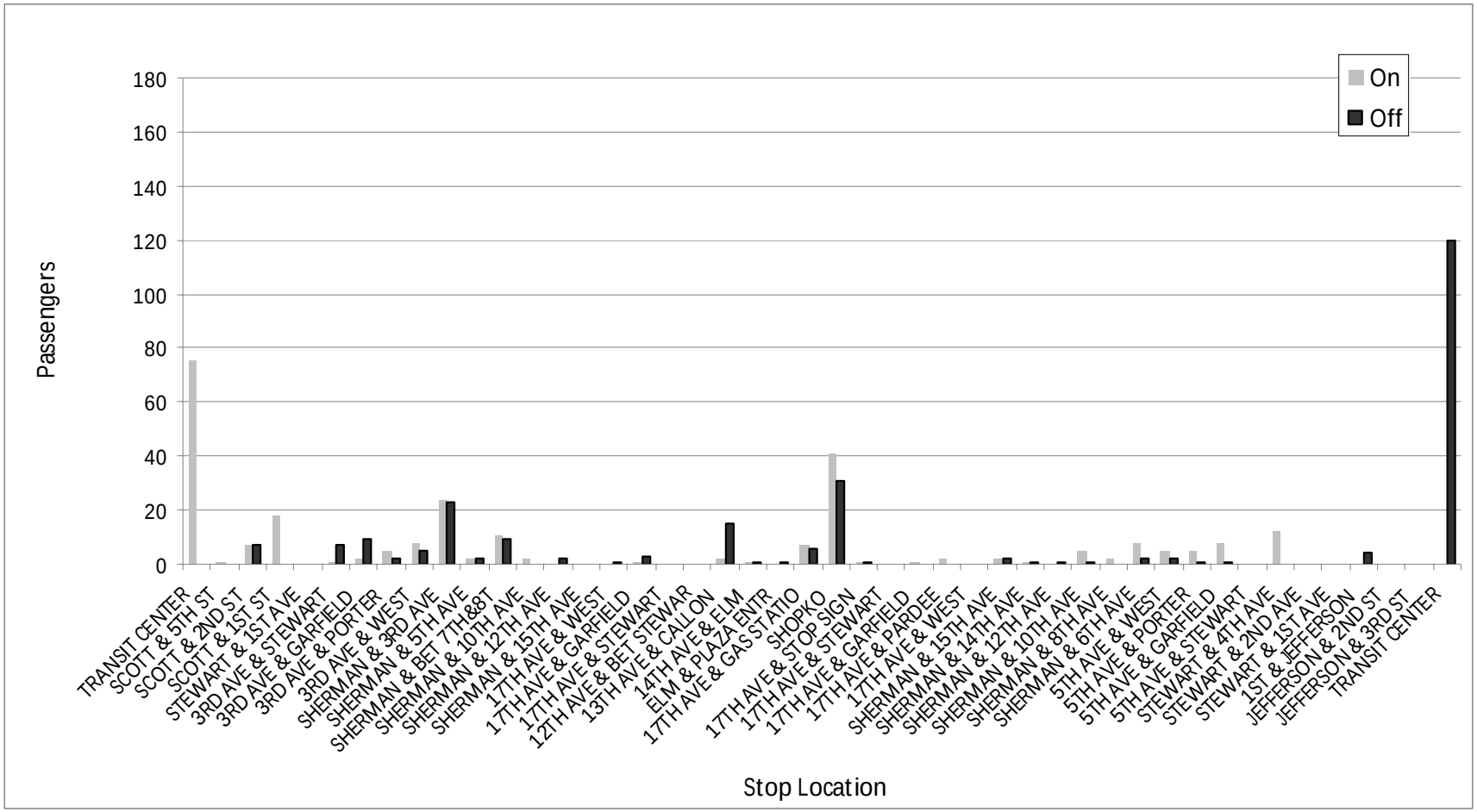
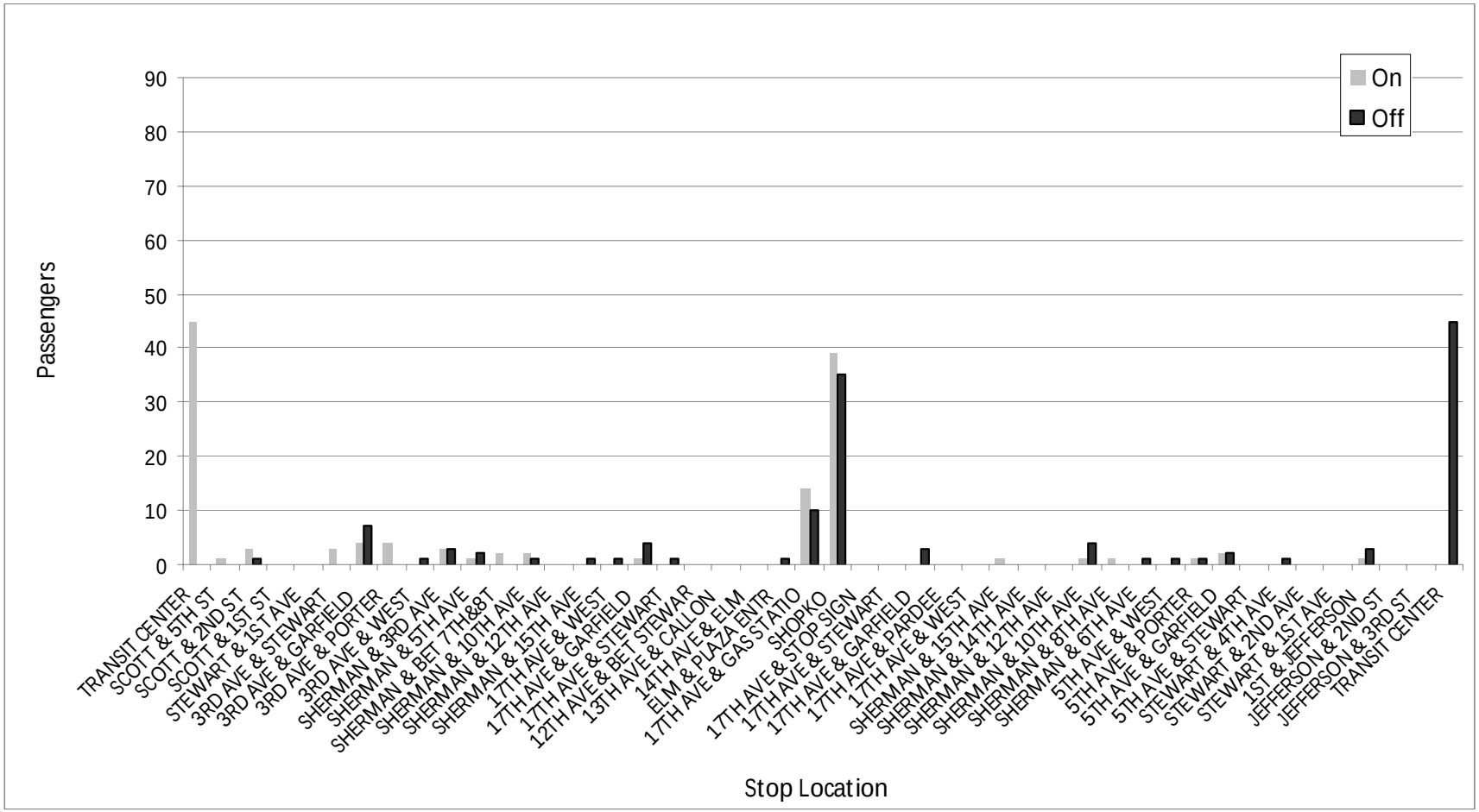


Figure E-26: Route G Saturday On/Off Activity



Route H – Route H is another good route, though ranking sixth on weekdays and seventh on Saturdays. This is the second longest of all the weekday routes, serving the northeast neighborhoods of Wausau with strong weekday anchors including Horace Mann Middle School, Franklin Elementary School, Saint Michael's School, and Riverview Elementary School. Table E-16 presents the operating statistics and indicators for Route H.

Table E-16: Route H Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	231	75
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	211	151
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$139	$45
Passengers per Mile	1.10	0.50
Passengers per Hour	18.86	8.57
Cost per Mile	$4.16	$4.14
Cost per Passenger	$3.80	$8.35
Subsidy per Passenger	$3.20	$7.75
Farebox Recovery	15.8%	7.2%
Cumulative Rank Score	18	21
Rank	6	7

Figure E-27 presents the time of day ridership profile on weekdays. Route H has a small weekday AM peak for the 7:00 AM trip, and a noticeable PM weekday peak from 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM, with the 3:00 PM trip having a load of 30 passengers. Outside of the peaks, the ridership is low, with trips rarely exceeding 10 passengers and many with ridership below 5 passengers, indicating a need to review the route's headways. Route H averages 9.2 passengers per trip on weekdays.

Figure E-28 presents the Saturday time of day ridership profile, which is sparse, with no trips having even 10 boardings. The loads again are low indicating a need to assess the headways on the route. Route H averages 4.2 passengers per trip on Saturdays.

Figure E-27: Route H Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

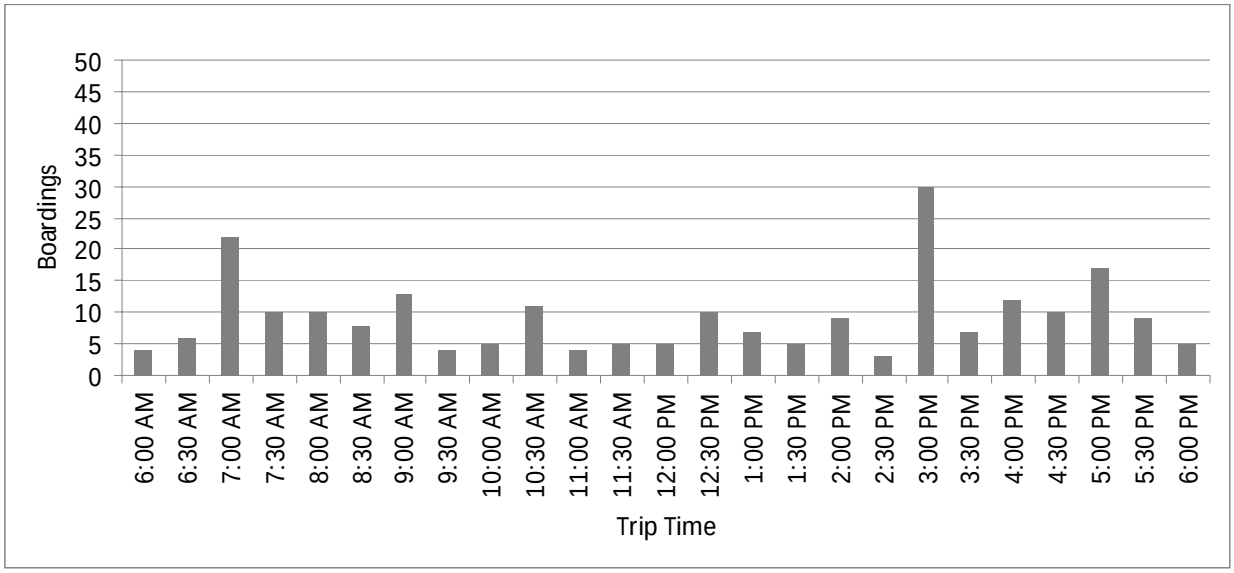
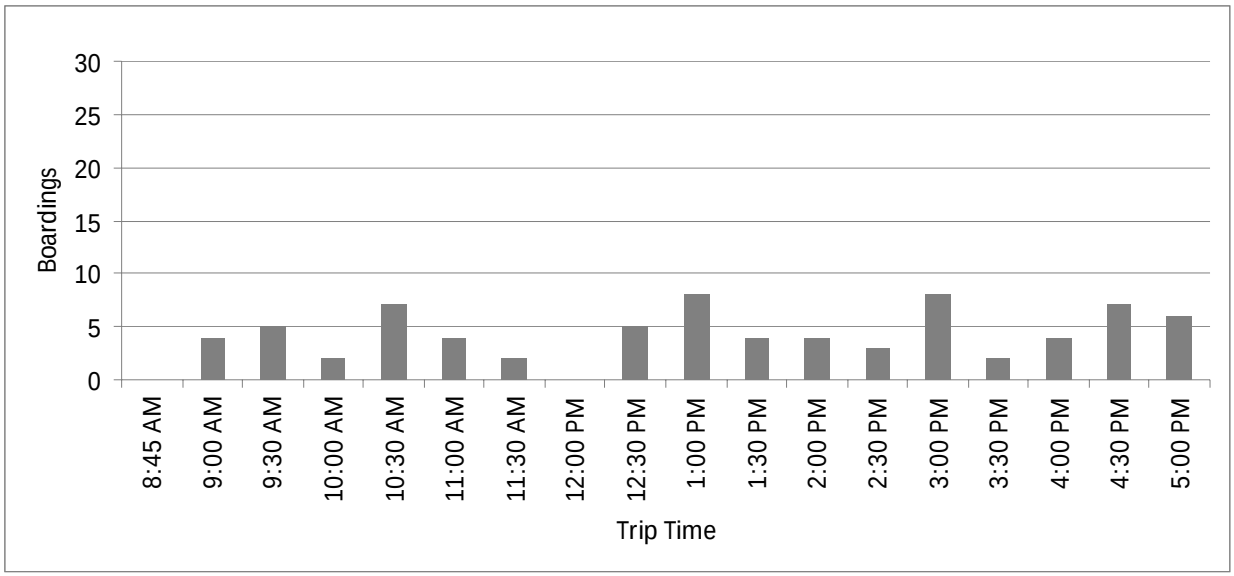


Figure E-28: Route H Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



The weekday bus stop boarding and alighting profile in Figure E-29 shows that most bus stops do have some modest boarding and alighting activity, with the highest activity levels occurring at the Transit Center and at Horace Mann Middle School. However, the northern loop of the route along Troy, Evergreen, Maple Hill, and Henry has the lowest ridership of the route.

The Saturday boarding and alighting profile, shown in Figure E-30, shows that there is solid boarding and alighting activity south of Brown Street, and virtually no activity north of Brown Street, indicating a need to assess the route's Saturday pattern.

Route H provides 30 minute service throughout the service day on both weekdays and Saturdays. On weekdays the observed average roundtrip travel time for this route is 28.1 minutes and on Saturdays the average observed roundtrip travel time is 26.4 minutes, both of which allow adequate recovery time at the Transit Center.

Overall, Route H performs well during the week, relying on student ridership generated all along the route. On Saturdays, the route does comparatively well within the Metro Ride network of routes, but like all other Saturday routes has low loads per trip and significant non-performing segments above Brown Street. The weekday peak ridership is driven by students, which in turn compensates for the low midday loads during the weekday, suggesting a review of the current headways.

Figure E-29: Route H Weekday On/Off Activity

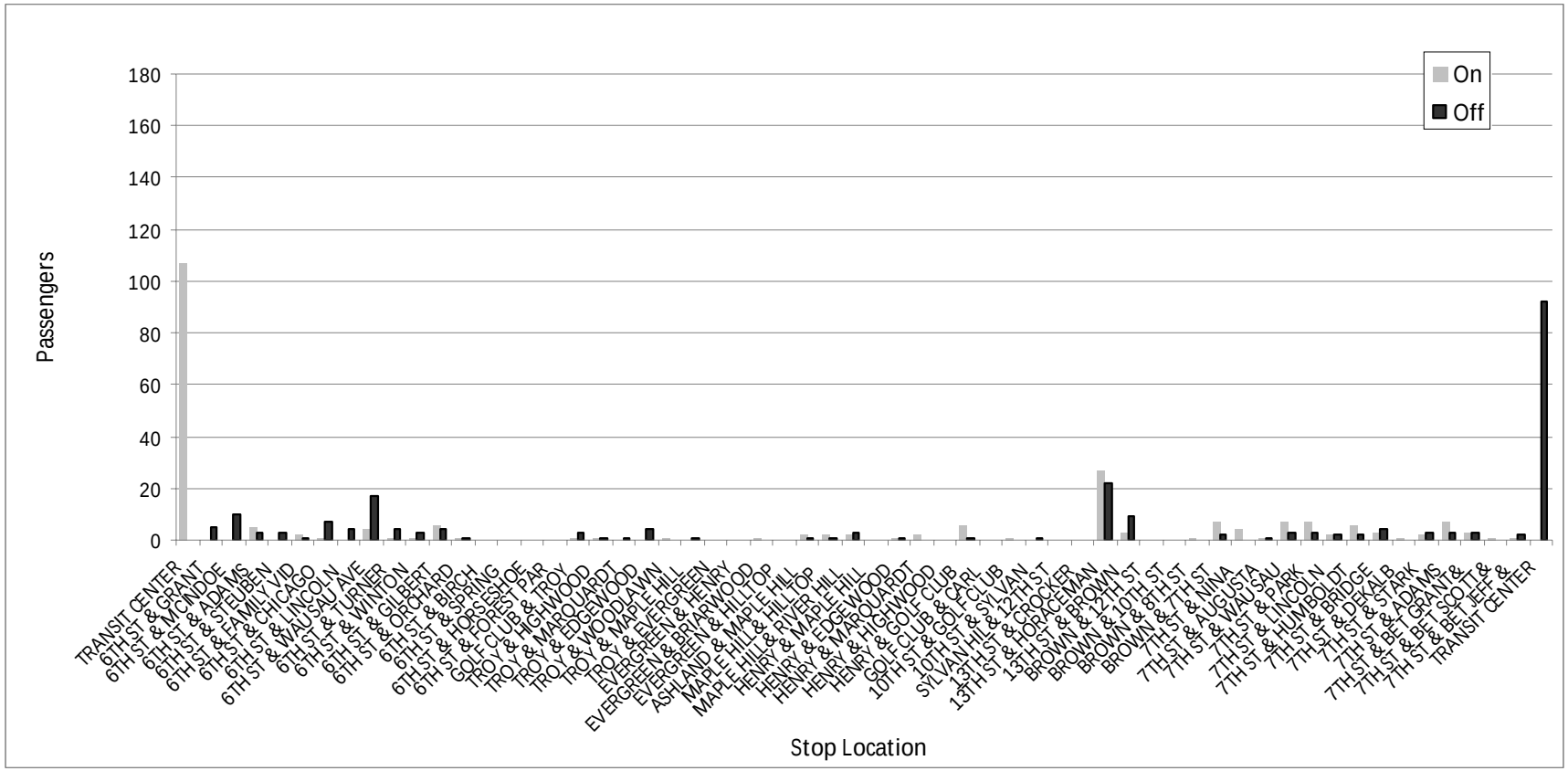
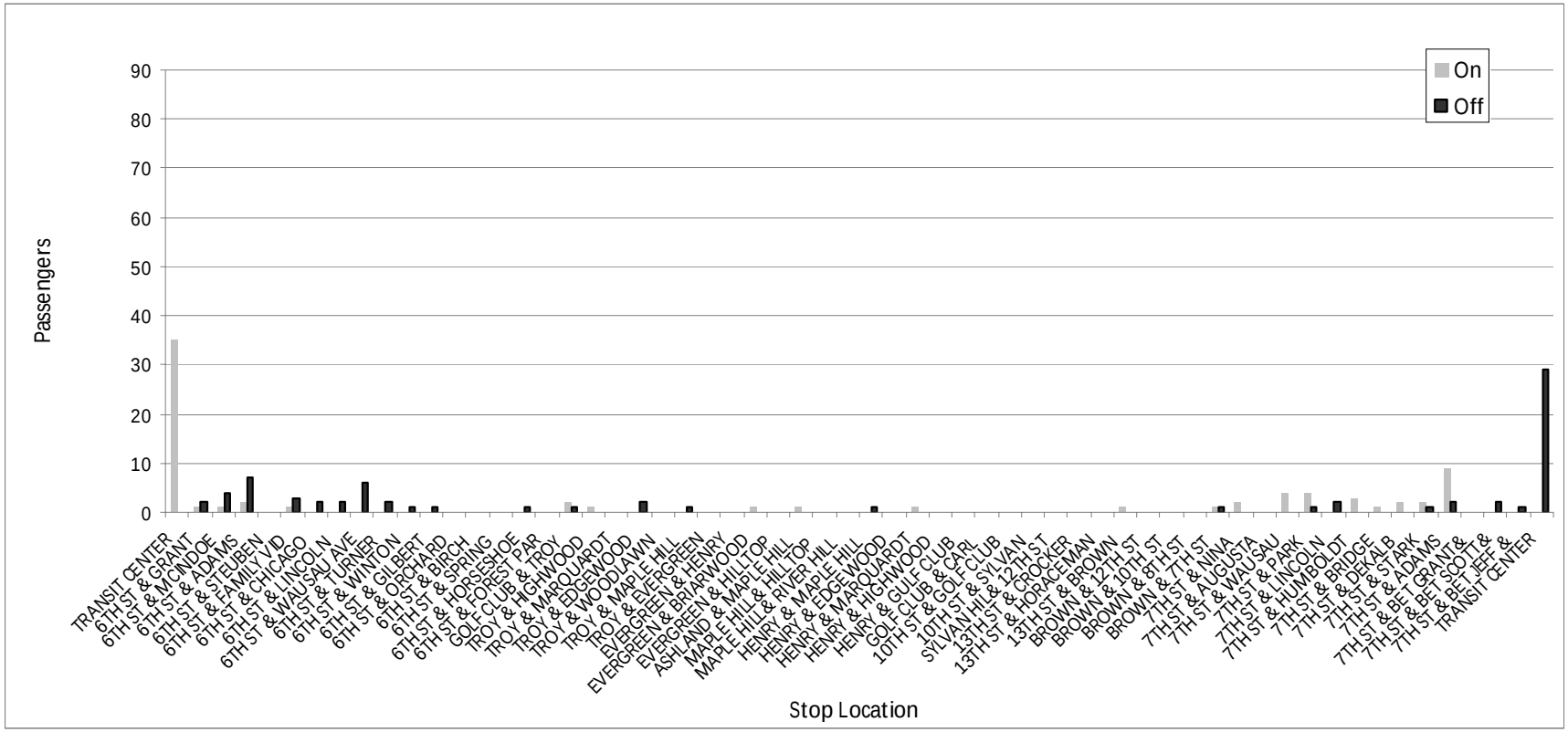


Figure E-30: Route H Saturday On/Off Activity



Route I – Route I has among the lowest levels of Saturday ridership in the system and ranks seventh on weekdays and ninth on Saturdays (Table E-17). Route I was modified in conjunction with Route G after the previous study and has experienced improved performance during the five-year period. This route serves the Stewart Avenue corridor to North 28th Avenue, turning north to serve a number of medical clinics including Marshfield Clinic and Aspirus Hospital & Clinic. This route also provides service to several schools including John Muir Middle School, University of Wisconsin-Marathon County, Faith Christian Academy and Trinity Elementary School.

Table E-17: Route I Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	224	54
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	181	130
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$134	$32
Passengers per Mile	1.24	0.42
Passengers per Hour	18.29	6.17
Cost per Mile	$4.85	$4.83
Cost per Passenger	$3.92	$11.60
Subsidy per Passenger	$3.32	$11.00
Farebox Recovery	15.3%	5.2%
Cumulative Rank Score	21	27
Rank	7	9

Despite the number of potential generators along the route, the route only carried 224 passengers when surveyed for the on/off counts on weekdays. Time of day ridership for this route is presented on Figure E-31 for weekday ridership and Figure E-32 for Saturday ridership.

Weekday ridership is pretty consistent throughout the day, though low. Boardings per trip average 9 passengers on weekdays. Students clearly drive at least two of the peak trips at 7:00 AM and 3:00 PM as they do on many other routes. Nonetheless, the peak boardings are only 18 and 24 passengers per trip, respectively. No other trips record more than 15 boardings.

On Saturdays Route I averages 3 passengers per trip. Morning trips at 9:00, 9:30 and 10:00 AM and the mid-day 12:30 PM trip have the highest loads, but all are under 10 boardings. Without the student passenger activity on Saturdays, the route does not produce much ridership and headways needs to be evaluated with Metro Ride staff.

Figure E-31: Route I Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

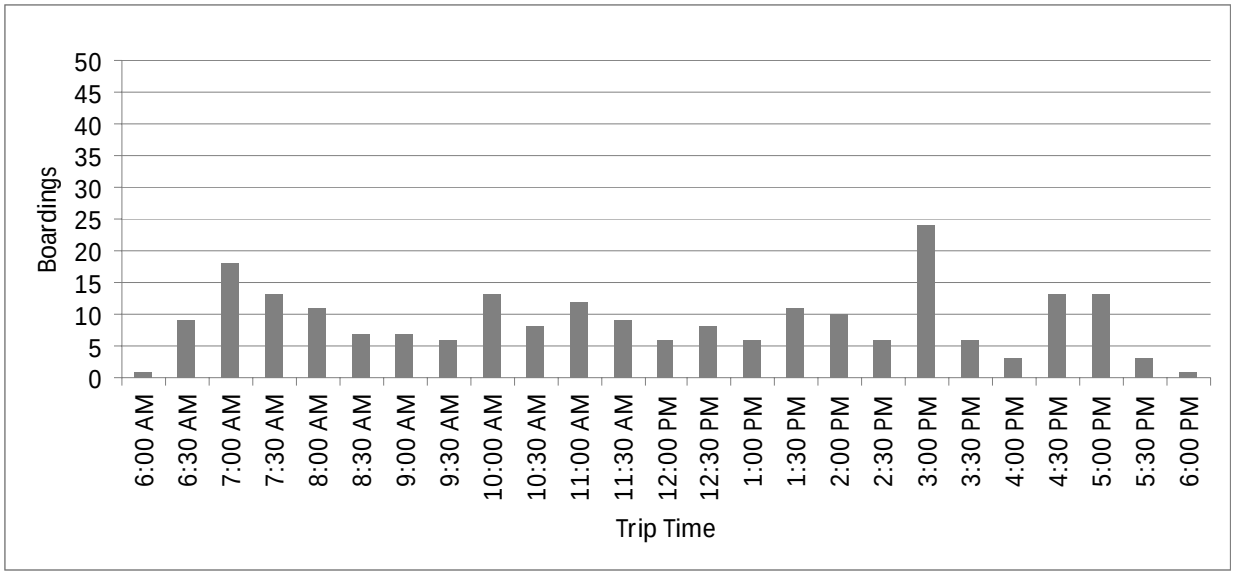
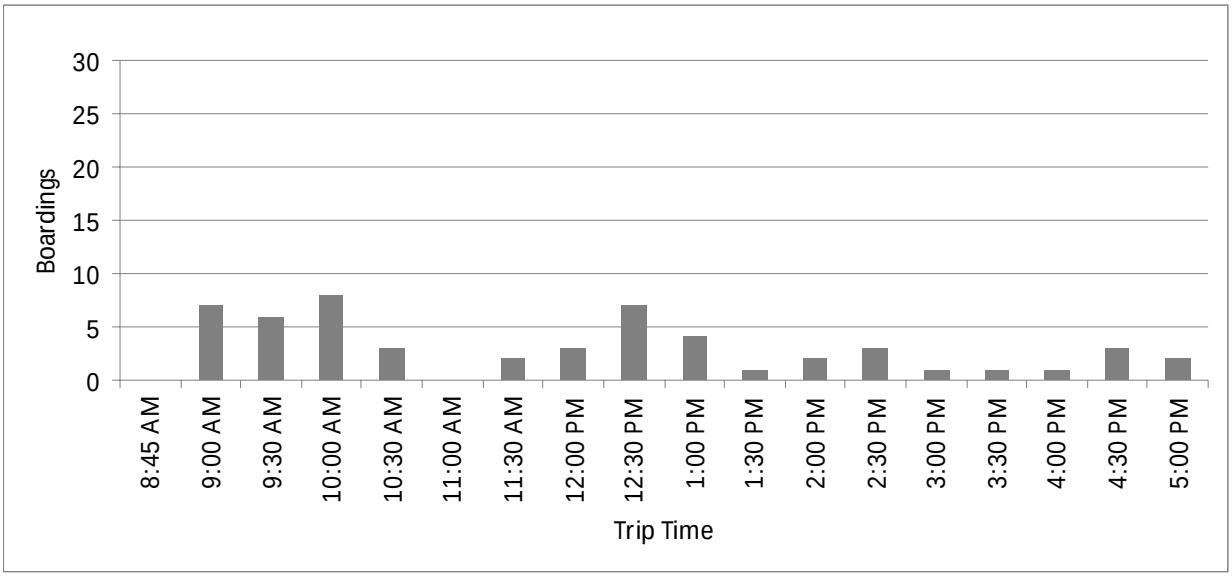


Figure E-32: Route I Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



The bus stop activity figures show that most of the ridership activity pretty steady throughout the route on weekdays but is concentrated at a few stops on Saturdays. Figure E-33 shows that on weekdays most stops have at least some activity, though ridership is low at most stops. The highest level of the boarding and alighting activity occurs at the Transit Center, Stewart and 12th Avenue, Marshfield Clinic, Aspirus Hospital, Westhill Drive and 28th Avenue, and Stewart and 7th Avenue.

Figure E-34 shows the Saturday boarding and alighting activity, which is very low throughout the route. Only the Transit Center stop has more than 10 passengers either boarding or

alighting. Otherwise, the next most active locations are the Bank of Wausau and Applebees on Stewart, but their combined activity is still fewer than 10 daily passengers.

This route provides 30 minute service all day on both weekdays and Saturdays. The average observed roundtrip running time for this route is 29 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays, which provides for a tight recovery.

Figure E-33: Route I Weekday On/Off Activity

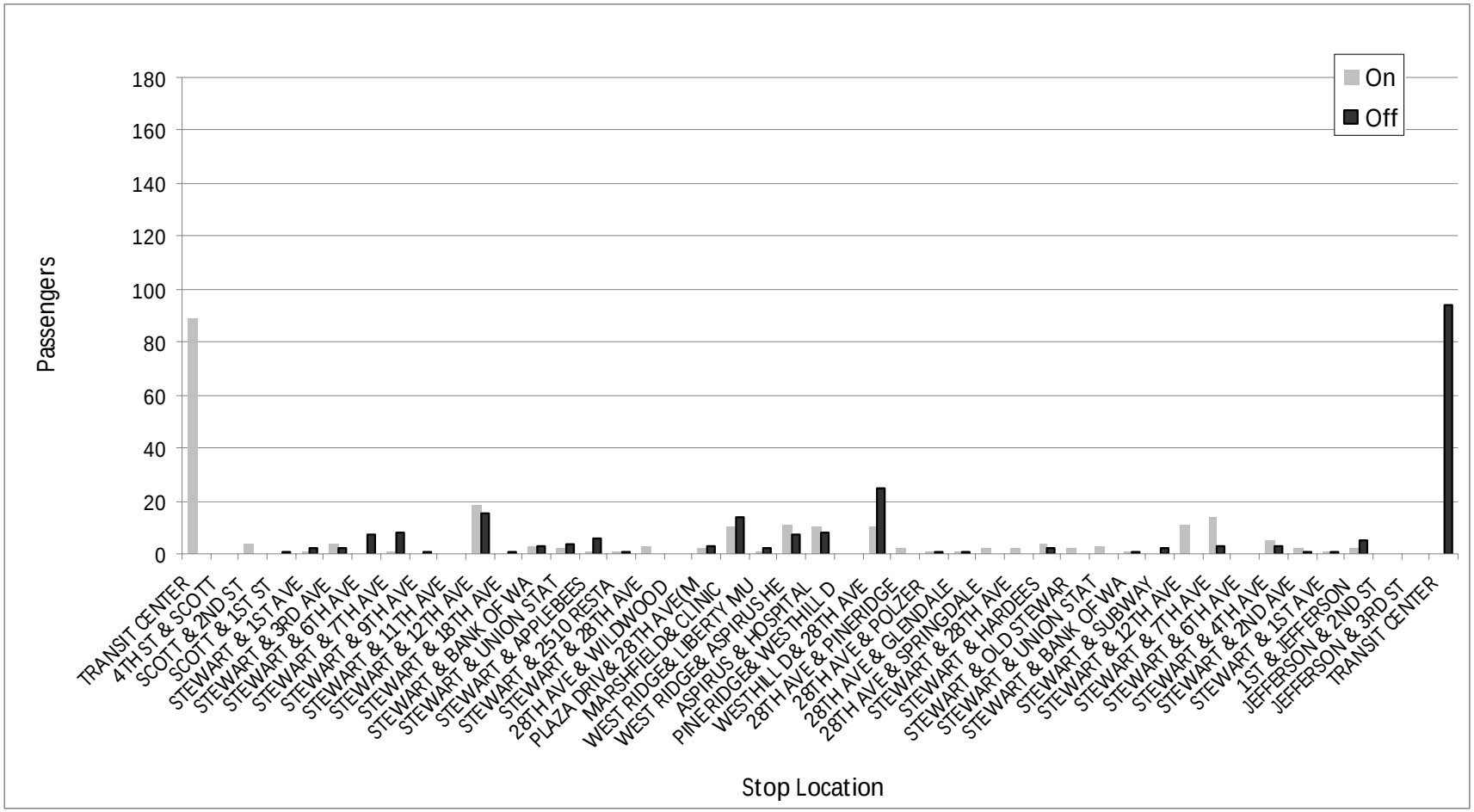
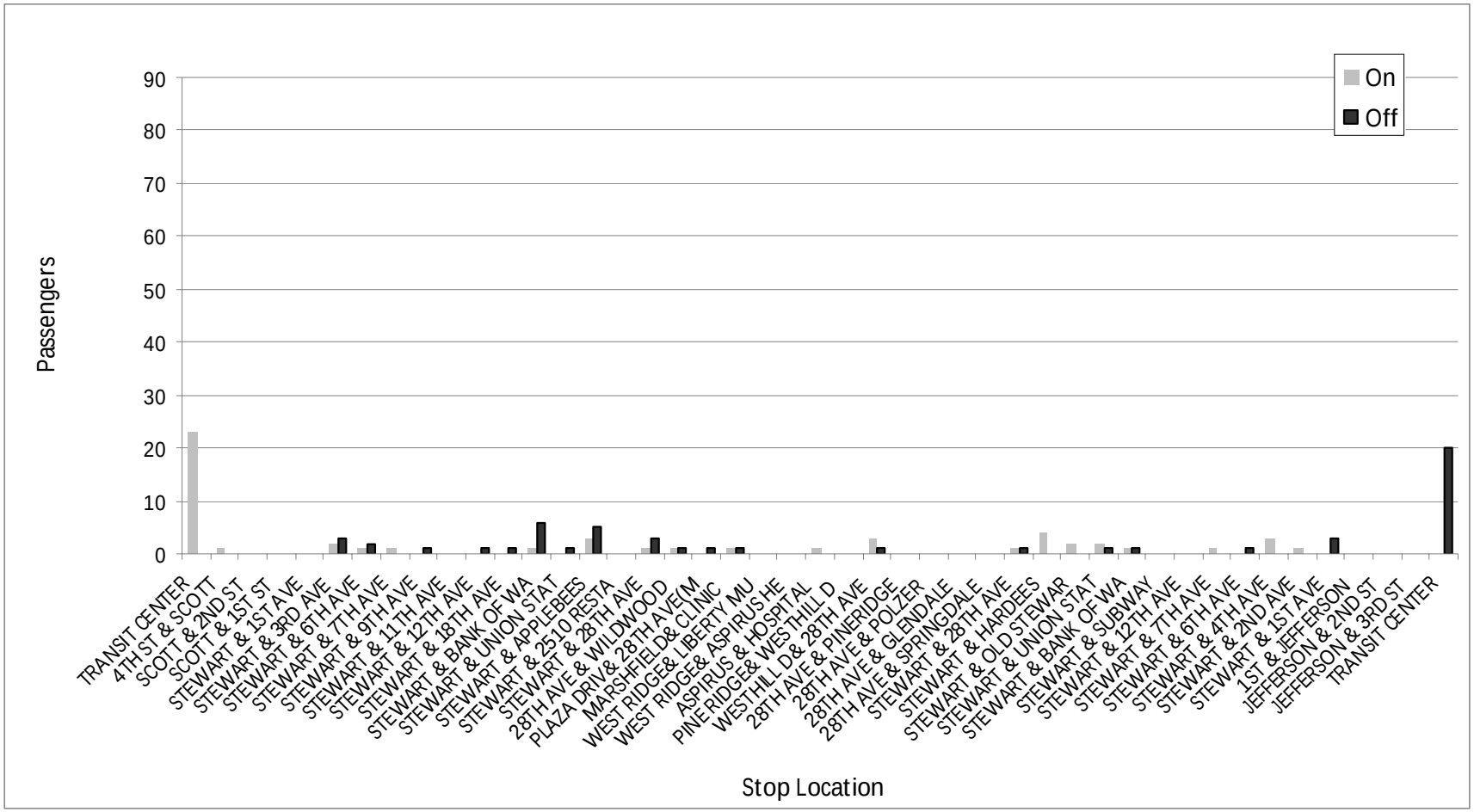


Figure E-34: Route I Saturday On/Off Activity



Route J – Route J's performance ranks it in the middle of all Metro Ride routes, fifth on weekdays and fourth on Saturdays. This route serves relatively dense residential areas in the southeast area of Wausau, and does not have any commercial anchors or major schools along its route. It does provide service to two smaller schools; G.D. Jones Elementary School, and Our Savior's School. Table E-18 presents the daily operating statistics and indicators for Route J.

Table E-18: Route J Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	243	84
Daily Revenue Hours	12.25	8.75
Daily Revenue Miles	193	139
Daily Operating Cost	$877	$627
Daily Farebox Revenue	$146	$50
Passengers per Mile	1.26	0.61
Passengers per Hour	19.84	9.60
Cost per Mile	$4.54	$4.51
Cost per Passenger	$3.61	$7.46
Subsidy per Passenger	$3.01	$6.86
Farebox Recovery	16.6%	8.0%
Cumulative Rank Score	15	12
Rank	5	4

The weekday time of day figure (Figure E-35) shows that this route carries a consistent number of passengers all day, with only two loads above 15 passengers (6:30 AM and 4:30 PM), with the average being 9.7 boardings per trip. These loads suggest a headway review. On Saturdays (Figure E-36), the roundtrip that carries the most passengers is at 12:00 PM, but it carries only 9 passengers. Otherwise ridership is consistent throughout the day, but very low, averaging 4.7 passengers per trip.

Figure E-35: Route J Weekday Ridership by Time of Day

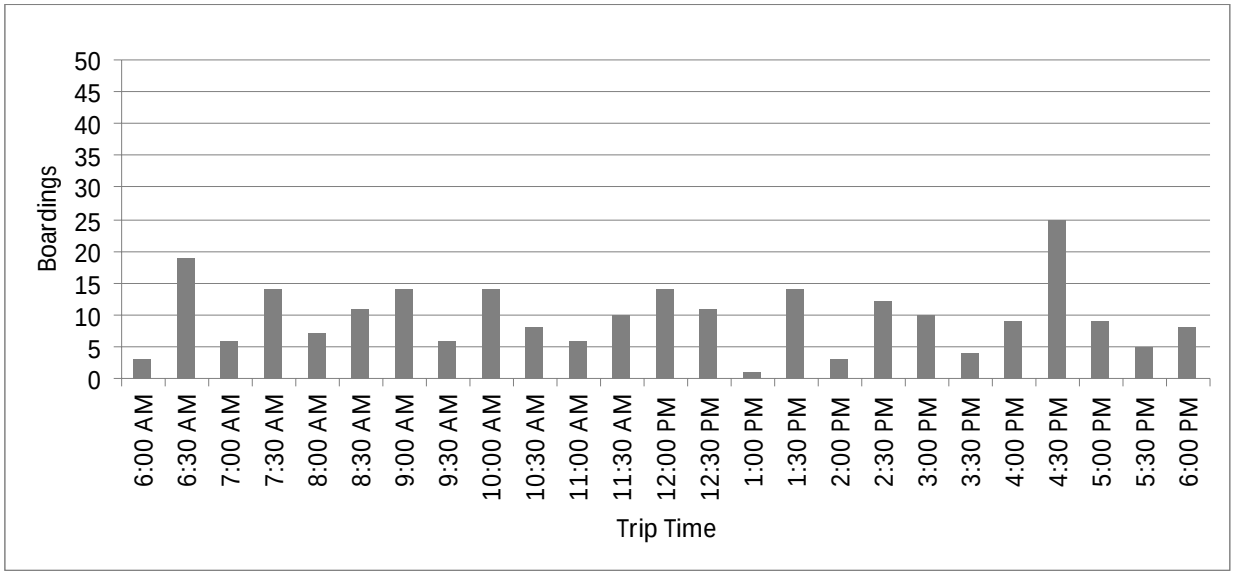
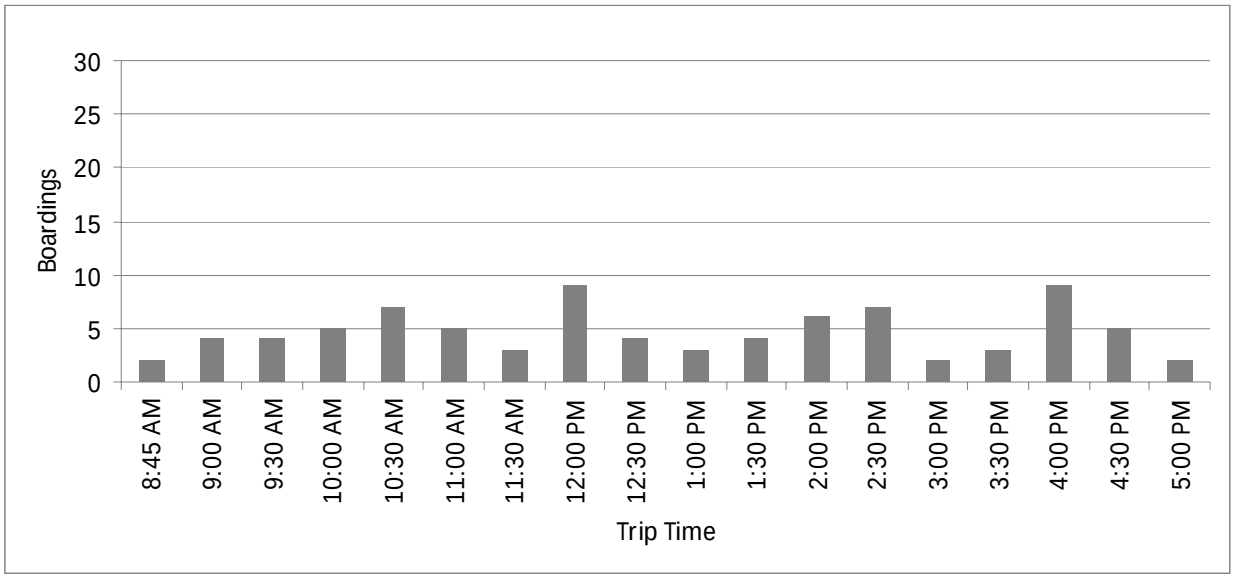


Figure E-36: Route J Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



With no key generators along the route, the only major on/off location is the Downtown Transit Center (Figure E-37). Otherwise, the route has steady ridership throughout the residential neighborhoods it serves, but very little between Sherman and 3rd Avenue. The Thomas Street section both outbound and inbound has the highest ridership.

Figure E-38 shows that the Saturday pattern is the same but at lower levels, with extremely limited ridership on the route between Sherman and 3rd Avenue.

Route J has a 30 minute headway all day on weekdays and Saturdays, with the average observed roundtrip travel time was 29.7 minutes on weekdays and 29.5 minutes on Saturdays.

This does not allow much time for route recovery and driver layovers either on weekdays or Saturdays, which will be discussed with Metro Ride staff.

Route J is a solid neighborhood route with steady if unspectacular ridership throughout. It connects the neighborhoods it serves to the rest of the community through downtown, which means that is does not provide direct service to the shopping area on the west side nor the hospitals, West High or Newman High. The route, with modifications, would likely provide the link between downtown and Rib Mountain Drive if the Town of Rib Mountain was to join the system, which would significantly change its character and performance.

Figure E-37: Route J Weekday On/Off Activity

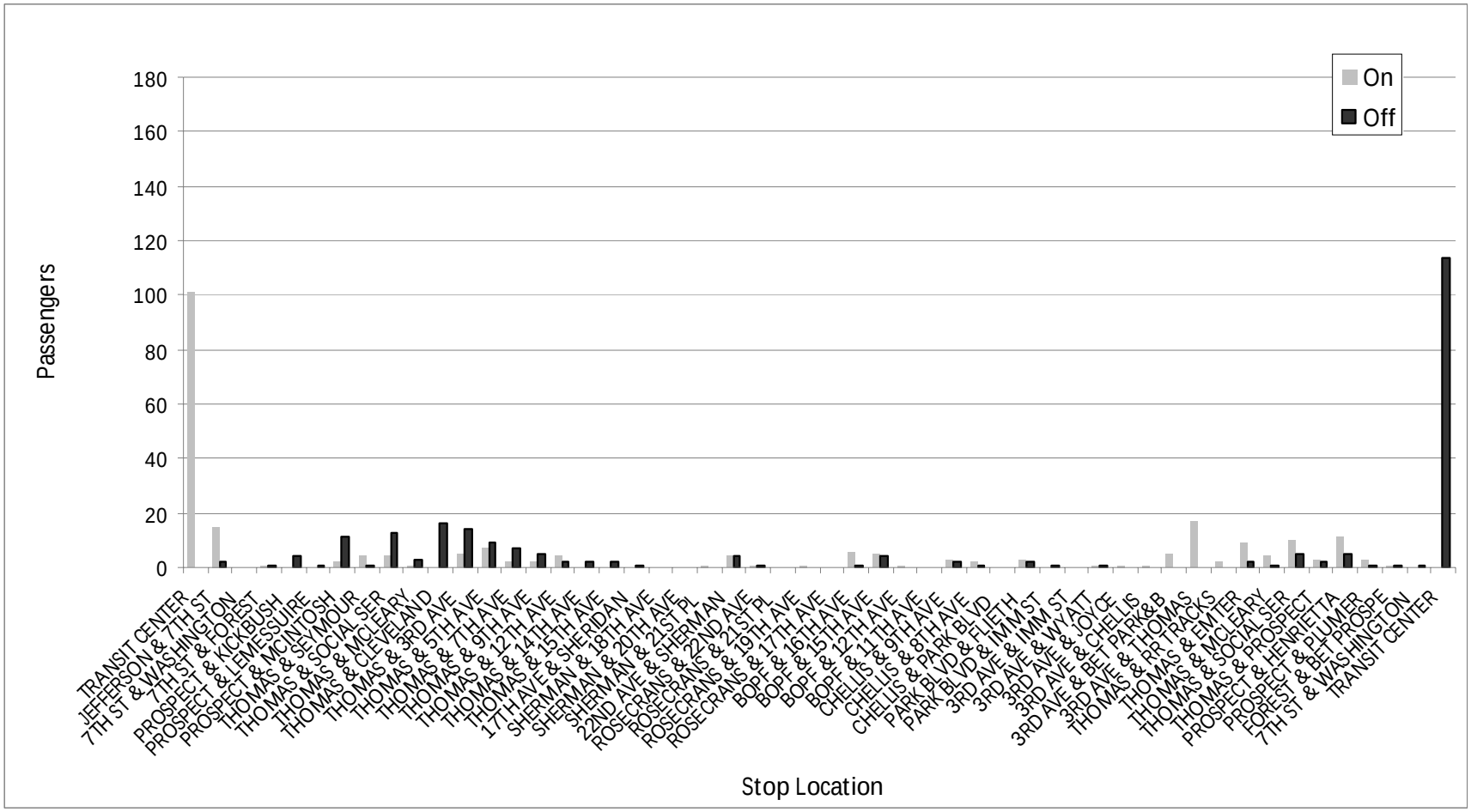
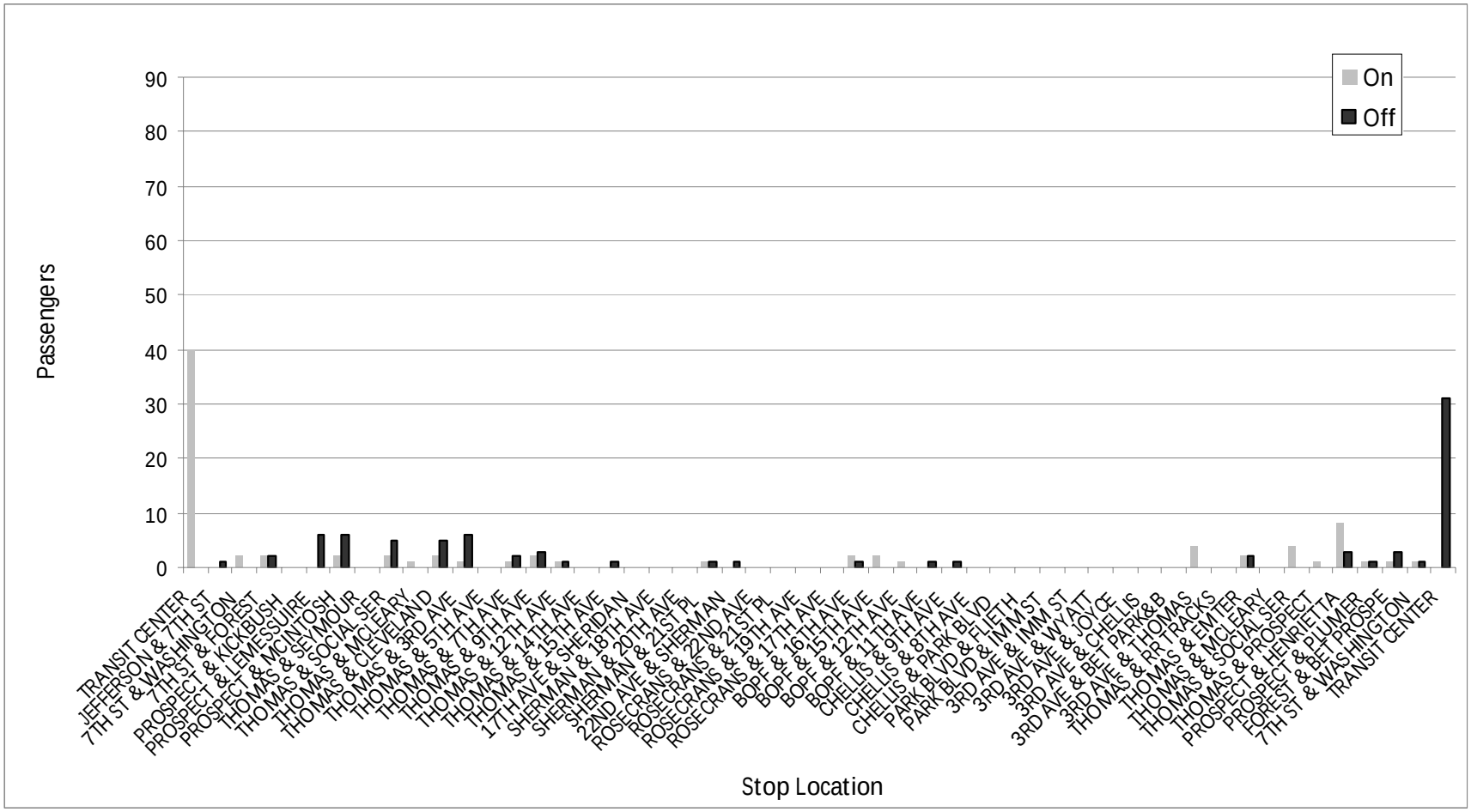


Figure E-38: Route J Saturday On/Off Activity



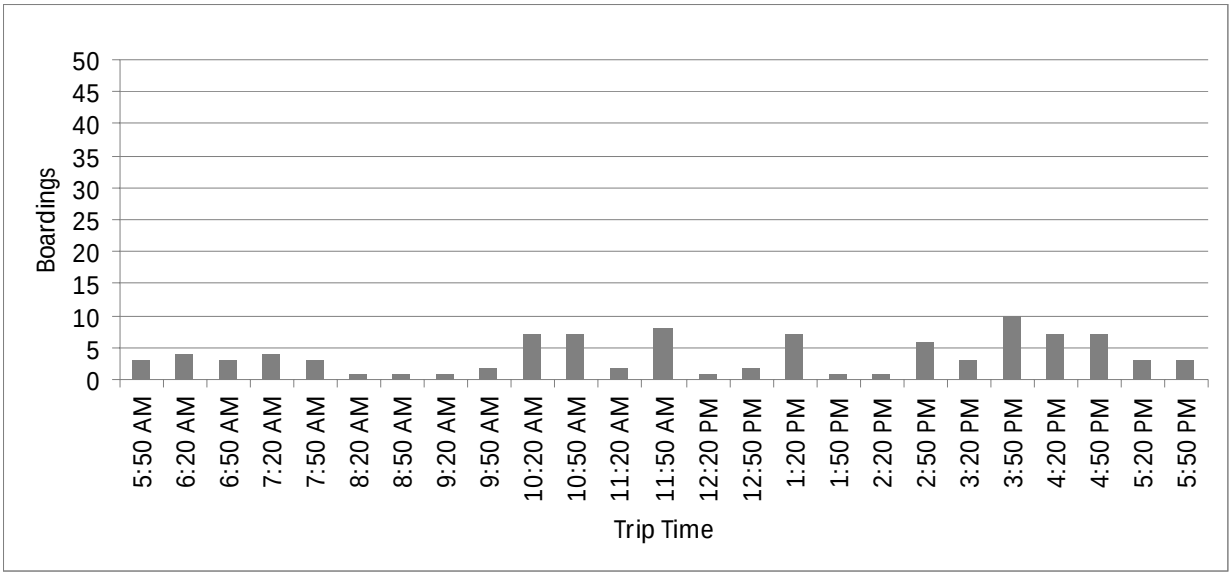
Route K – Route K is a new route since the previous study and serves the Village of Weston. The route is a large loop that meets Route C on weekdays or Routes F and L on Saturdays at the Shopko and continues around Weston serving shopping centers such as Target and Goodwill, healthcare facilities such as St. Clare's Hospital and the Marshfield Clinic Weston Center, and schools such as the DC Everest High School. Route K as presently operated is ranked lowest among weekday routes and 8th among Saturday routes. Daily operating statistics and indicators are presented in Table E-19.

Table E-19: Route K Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Weekday	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	97	33
Daily Revenue Hours	12.5	4
Daily Revenue Miles	201	62
Daily Operating Cost	$895	$286
Daily Farebox Revenue	$58	$20
Passengers per Mile	0.48	0.53
Passengers per Hour	7.76	8.25
Cost per Mile	$4.46	$4.59
Cost per Passenger	$9.23	$8.68
Subsidy per Passenger	$8.63	$8.08
Farebox Recovery	6.5%	6.9%
Cumulative Rank Score	27	24
Rank	9	8

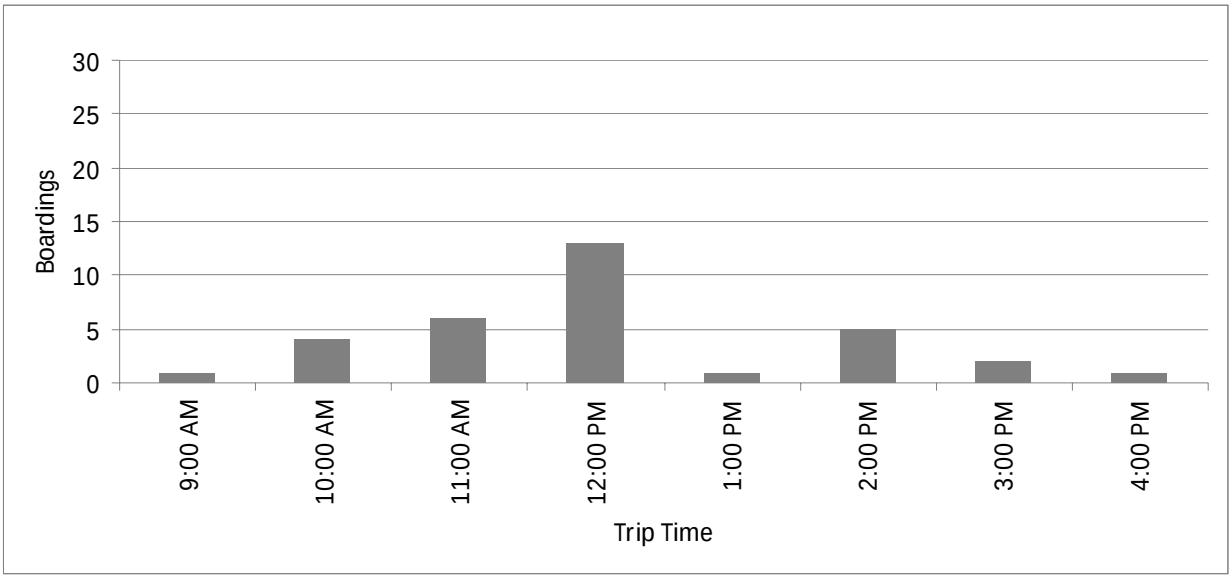
Route K ridership is consistent throughout the day, but is low. The 3:50 PM trip has the highest number of boardings with 10. Figure E-39 shows the weekday ridership trend by time of day. The profile suggests a headway review for Route K be conducted as part of the analysis.

Figure E-39: Route K Weekday Ridership by Time of Day



On Saturdays Route K is interlined with Route L and is operated on 60 minute headways. Ridership is very low throughout the day, but peaks at 12:00 PM with 13 passengers. Otherwise, all trips have 6 or fewer passengers per trip.

Figure E-40: Route K Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



Figures E-41 and E-42 describe the ridership of Route K by stop for weekdays and Saturdays. Ridership is highest at Shopko (the transfer point to the rest of the Metro Ride system). On weekdays, ridership is consistent along the loop from Shopko to Camp Phillips Road, and then drops off through the rest of the loop back to Shopko, with the small exceptions of stops at Marshfield Clinic and St. Clare's Hospital. On Saturdays, the only substantial activity occurs at

the Shopko, Goodwill, and Pick 'n Save stops. These activity charts suggests possible re-routing to increase both performance and ridership.

Figure E-41: Route K Weekday On/Off Activity

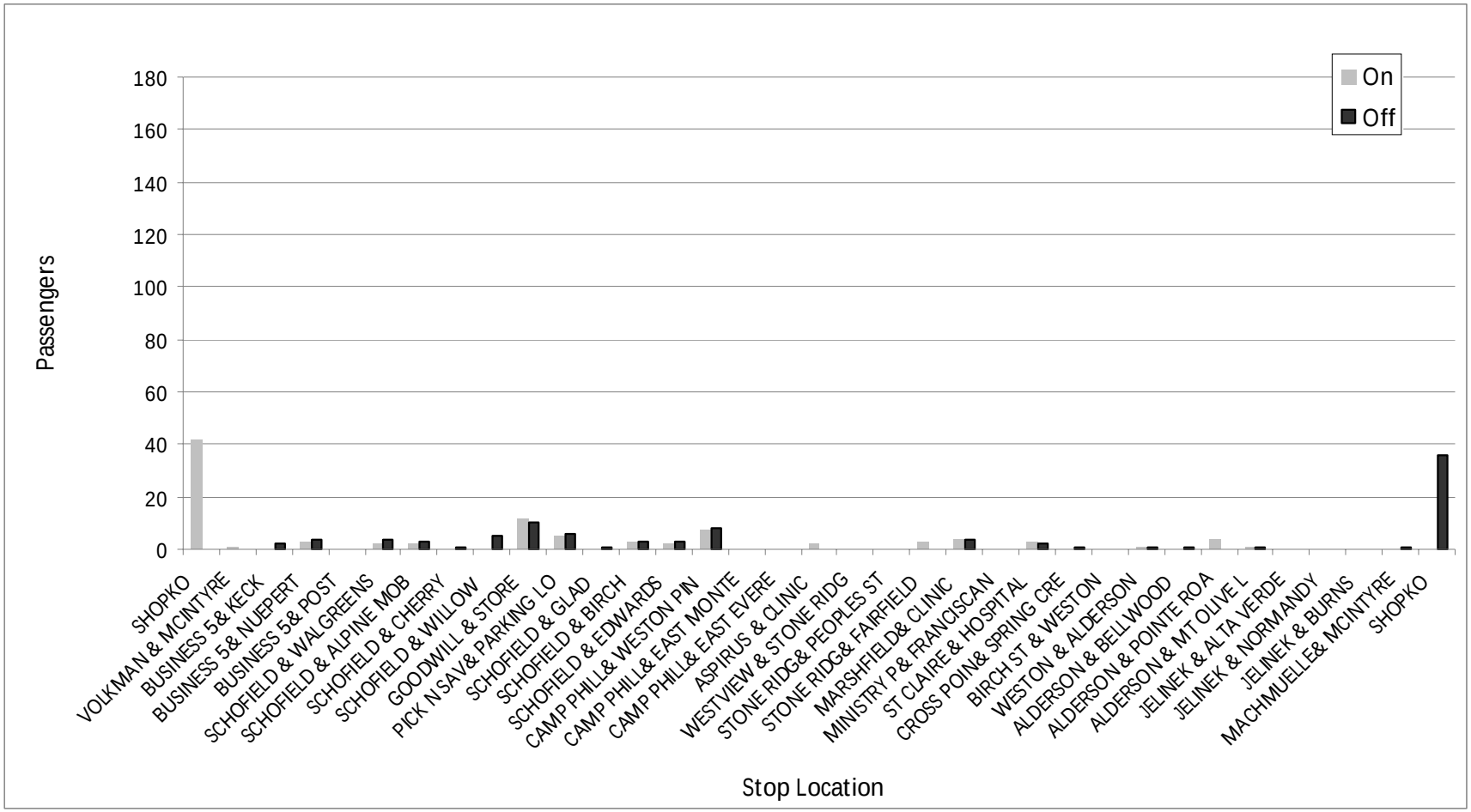
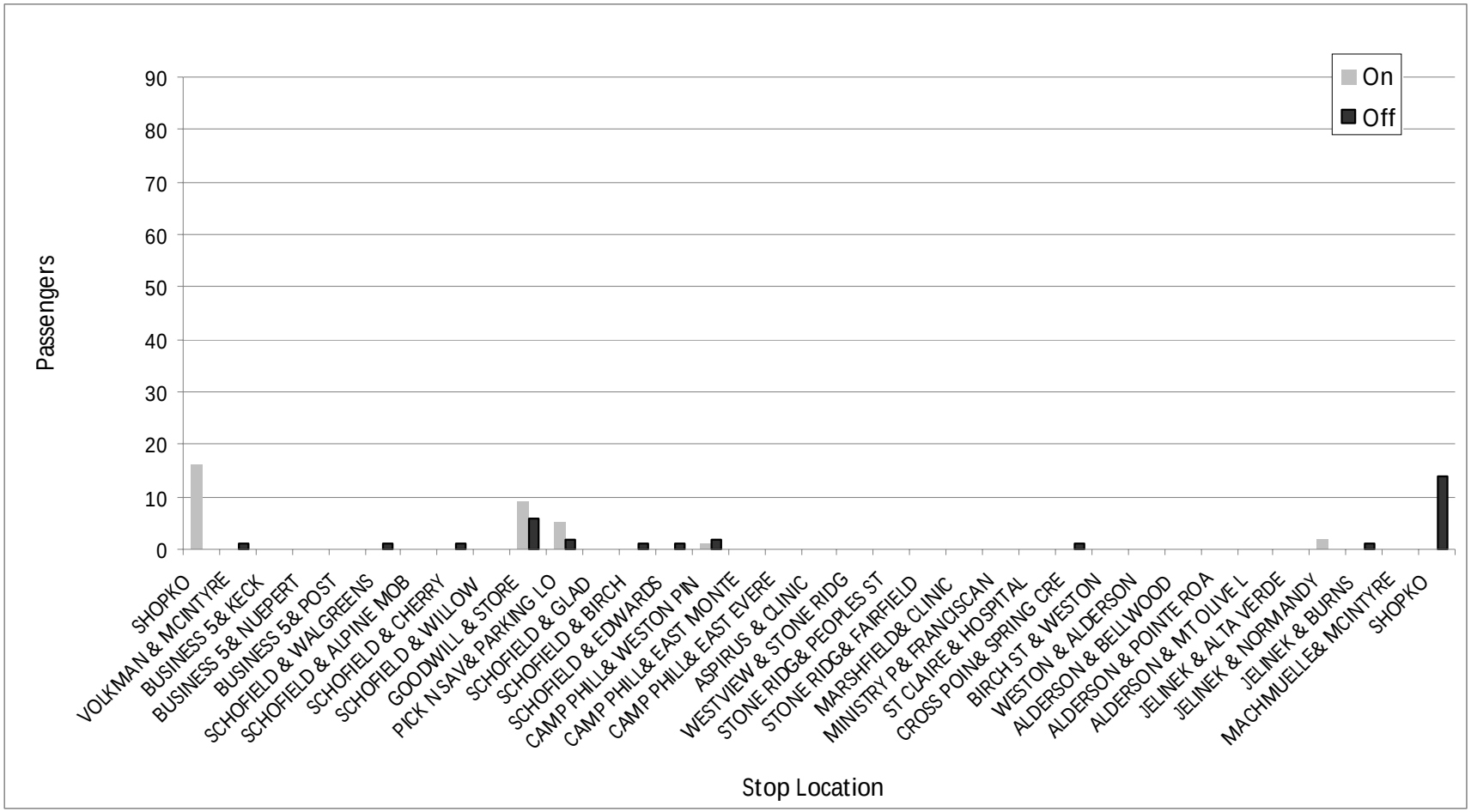


Figure E-42: Route K Saturday On/Off Activity



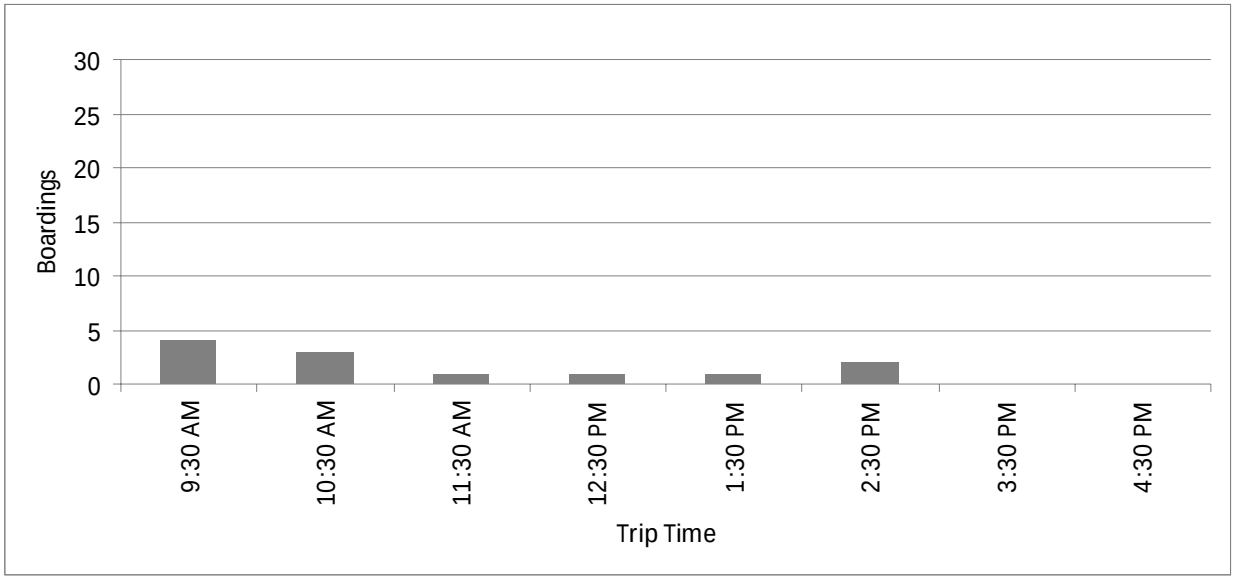
Route L – Route L is operated on Saturdays only and is new since the previous study. Route L replaced a section of Route C on Saturdays and operates along Business Highway 51 to the Cedar Creek Mall area. Route L is interlined with Route K on Saturdays and therefore provides hourly service. Route L serves the Shopko in Rothschild where it meets Route F, which connects to the downtown Wausau Transit Center. Route L also serves other destinations in the Village of Rothschild all the way to Cedar Creek. Daily operating statistics and indicators are presented in Table E-20. Route L is ranked the lowest of all the Saturday routes.

Table E-20: Route L Indicators

Factor/Indicator	Saturday
Average Daily Ridership	12
Daily Revenue Hours	4
Daily Revenue Miles	64
Daily Operating Cost	$286
Daily Farebox Revenue	$7
Passengers per Mile	0.19
Passengers per Hour	3.00
Cost per Mile	$4.47
Cost per Passenger	$23.87
Subsidy per Passenger	$23.27
Farebox Recovery	2.5%
Cumulative Rank Score	30
Rank	10

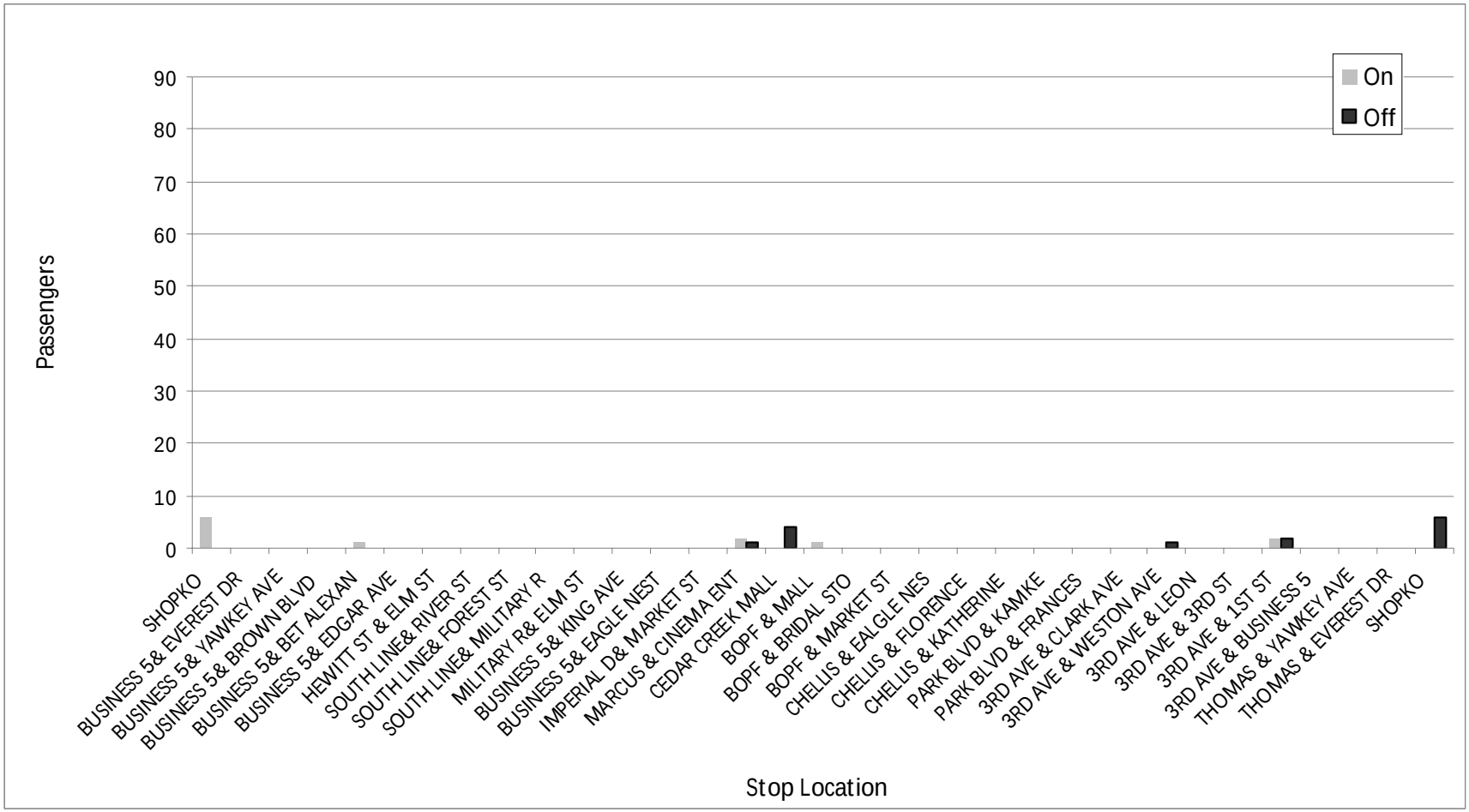
Figure E-43 shows the Saturday ridership by time of day for Route L. No trips have more than 4 boardings. Three trips have only one passenger and two trips have no passengers.

Figure E-43: Route L Saturday Ridership by Time of Day



The ridership activity by stop is presented in Figure E-44. On Saturdays, the only bus stops with any activity on Route L are Shopko, the cinema, Cedar Creek Mall, 3rd Avenue and Weston Avenue, and 3rd Avenue and 1st Street. The activity at these stops is extremely small, with none having more than 6 daily passengers. No other stops have any activity.

Figure E-44: Route L Saturday On/Off Activity



System Issues and Opportunities

This chapter is the third to analyze and discuss issues regarding Metro Ride service and the community, the other two being the memoranda on peers and trends and on public outreach. Three broad themes have emerged which frame the issues, opportunities, and subsequently the development of alternatives and the five year plan:

- The overall quality of the Metro Ride program is excellent, and where service is provided it is done professionally with a high regard for the customer.

- Metro Ride started new service to both Weston and Cedar Creek (Saturdays only) since the previous study. However, the Village of Weston plans to stop funding the service (Route K) at the end of December 2011. The riders commented heavily that service to Weston is necessary. Based on the ridership profile of the existing Route K, it is clear that the route could be modified to be more streamlined and efficient and potentially produce higher ridership.

- There is large demand for service to Rib Mountain, where the greatest amount of new development in retail shopping is occurring. However, the Town of Rib Mountain has previously been unwilling to financially support a route in the town. However, riders were quick to comment that any service to Rib Mountain, even if limited, would be an improvement to the overall Metro Ride service.

- Service to Cedar Creek was established after the previous study, but only on Saturdays during the school year. Since the previous study, Globe University, whose representatives met with the study team during the outreach sessions, has been established and has demand for weekday service from downtown Wausau.

- Taking the previous two bullets together, and looking at the community profiles and rider/stakeholder input, the development of a truly regional Metro Ride program is what is being called for in the Wausau metropolitan area. The following was stated during the 2005 study and remains appropriate in 2011:

    > Metro Ride should be a regional system, serving the most densely populated parts of the region as it is today and will be over the next five years – Wausau, Weston, Schofield, Rothschild, and Rib Mountain – with the potential to expand to Stettin, Kronenwetter, and Mosinee when and if those locations reach appropriate densities for service.

- Additionally, ridership on Saturdays is very low, particularly on certain routes and service frequencies on both weekdays and Saturdays could potentially be modified on

some routes and still maintain similar ridership. These route-level recommendations will be discussed further below.

The majority of the stakeholders and riders, speaking on behalf of the community, have positive feelings concerning the services that Metro Ride currently provides, the professionalism with which the services are delivered, and the need to maintain a bus system as a part of the urban infrastructure. This professionalism is reflected in Metro Ride staff's ability to maintain reasonable performance levels during the preceding five-year period even as public resources were reduced and fares raised, all while maintaining a very low administrative budget (13.6 percent of the budget for 2011), especially when compared to peer systems throughout the region (3.8 percent lower than the Wisconsin peers and 1.1 percent lower than the nationwide peers according to 2009 National Transit Database figures).

Given this context, the identification of issues related to service levels and individual routes in this chapter have to be considered with a backdrop of two scenarios, one with and one without service to Weston, Cedar Creek, and Rib Mountain.

Therefore, the first and most significant issue/opportunity, along with its corollary opportunities, is as follows:

- The City of Wausau needs to work with its neighbors to develop and implement new services to Rib Mountain Drive and maintain service to Weston, integrating these services into the current route network. Specific routes, schedules, and forecasted operating costs and subsidies need to be well-defined and developed in a partnership with these communities. It is important to note that it is the general feeling of the riders that any service to Rib Mountain, even if only operated a few times daily, would be acceptable. The inclusion of any or all of these locations will have an immediate and dramatic impact upon each of the issues identified in this current chapter relating to headways, load factors, productivity, and other service adjustments.

- In conjunction with the above, the system identity needs to be changed to reflect Metro Ride' identity as a regional transit system, and a marketing and program needs to be developed to reflect the new image and services to the community.

- An expanded Metro Ride program should also consider the need for evening services to first and foremost provide employment opportunities, but also to provide evening access for shopping and other recreational uses.

- The entire Metro Ride network would be reexamined and revised in light of an expansion, but it is expected that expansion would only have positive impacts on ridership even on the least productive routes.

Expansion is clearly the key to an exciting future for Metro Ride and the Wausau urbanized area. However, in the absence of expansion, there are some very basic issues which need to be addressed:

- The Metro Ride ridership base, which is currently heavily based upon school aged riders, who make up 23 percent of the regular route users and are nearly all of the express bus users, has to be expanded in order for Metro Ride to remain stable and/or grow even modestly in the next five years. Providing expanded service is clearly the best option, but others include revisiting services to the West Wausau area healthcare and services and other major generators in the existing service area. Diversity of ridership did improve from 2005 to 2011, with the percentage of school-age riders using regular routes decreasing and total ridership remaining steady.

- Metro Ride needs to improve its ridership productivity and trip loads, by either serving new markets or by trimming headways appropriately, be they peak, off-peak, or Saturdays. At present, there are many routes with all-day 30 minute headways that do not appear to require that much service.

- Similarly, the entire Saturday service needs to be reviewed and discussed, as ridership levels and productivity on most of the routes are not up to reasonable standards, service is provided every 30 minutes on most routes, and passenger loads are very low, particularly on Routes L, K, H and D.

- Flexible services -- route deviation, flex routes, demand response services -- may be an option for lower density neighborhoods and/or for areas where current fixed route ridership is very low. These type of services travel off route (or do not have a route) and are provided within a specified area to pick up or drop off passengers upon request. Ideally smaller vehicles would operate on route deviated services and the capital program of Metro Ride will be reviewed in conjunction with any such options.

- All other details discussed on a route by route basis concerning segment analyses, headways, directness, etc. need to be reviewed and discussed.

In conclusion, the Metro Ride system is stalled at the same crossroads as it was in 1999 and 2005, with two alternative futures. Without expansion into surrounding communities, it is likely that the system will need to be trimmed to bring service levels in line with ridership, and that going forward ridership levels will likely remain generally flat. Under such a scenario, Metro Ride will not only not grow but will likely continue to slowly shrink, eventually providing services only to students and those who have no other means of transportation.

With an expansion program, Metro Ride has a dynamic future. Ridership levels would increase on all routes and in all locations served by Metro Ride, most current headways could be maintained, and evening service would become a real possibility in the later years of the program. With opportunities to reach all of the area's key commercial centers, hospitals, and

schools, the ridership base would grow beyond its student and transit dependent base. Finally, with a new identity, Metro Ride would be perceived as a regional system and significant contributor to the economic growth of the community.

Appendix F SERVICE PLAN

Introduction

Previous chapters provided an overview of the environment in which Metro Ride operates, the service provided by Metro Ride, the public outreach process for this study, and an analysis and evaluation of the Metro Ride fixed routes. This technical memorandum presents service options, projected costs, and an implementation strategy for the next five years.

The service plan, which forms the core of the program, describes route and service changes, including:

- Modifications to existing Metro Ride routes
- Schedule changes
- Headway adjustments
- Operating days
- Operating hours
- Fare policy

The recommendations grow out of the analyses conducted in the earlier phases of the project, and the route studies and issues and opportunities discussions specifically contained in Chapter 5. As a result, the recommendations and selections consider all of the inputs to the project provided through the outreach process, community and demographic analysis, operating and financial statistics, and staff/Transit Commission input. While not possible to immediately implement the changes to create the recommended regional transit network in the Wausau area, it is hoped that over the coming 5-year period that the financial and political environment will allow the regional network to be realized.

Five-Year Operating Budget

Estimated budget figures for the next five years have been provided by Metro Ride from the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) 2012-2016. Table F-1 lists the details of the operating budget estimates through 2016.

Table F-1: Estimated Operating Budget 2012-2016

Operating Assistance Calculation	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Expense	$4,327,773	$3,851,718	$3,967,270	$4,125,960	$4,290,999	$4,462,639
Total Revenue	$635,859	$639,038	$645,429	$651,883	$658,402	$664,986
Public Funding Required	$3,691,914	$3,212,680	$3,321,841	$3,474,077	$3,632,597	$3,797,653
Federal Operating Assistance	$1,332,954	$1,155,515	$1,190,181	$1,237,788	$1,330,210	$1,383,418
State Operating Assistance - s.85.20	$1,155,515	$1,039,964	$1,031,490	$948,971	$1,029,840	$1,071,033
State Elderly/Disabled Funding - s.85.21	$77,538	$77,538	$77,538	$79,089	$80,671	$82,284
Total State and Federal Assistance	$2,566,007	$2,273,017	$2,299,209	$2,265,848	$2,440,720	$2,536,735
Local Share	$1,125,907	$939,662	$1,022,632	$1,208,230	$1,191,877	$1,260,918
Federal	30.80%	30.00%	30.00%	30.00%	31.00%	31.00%
State	26.70%	27.00%	26.00%	23.00%	24.00%	24.00%
Total Subsidy	57.50%	57.00%	56.00%	53.00%	55.00%	55.00%

Metro Ride is facing a 13% reduction in operating budget in 2012 from 2011. In 2012, Metro Ride will need to operate with a budget of $479,234 less than in 2011. Funding from Weston, Schofield, Rothschild, and Marathon County has also been removed for 2012. The Northcentral Area Congregations Organized to Make an Impact (NAOMI) raised approximately $18,000 to try to save service to these three communities, but no feasible routing options existed within that limited budget.

Additionally, the fares will be raised in for all fare media in 2012, as approved by the Transit Commission in late 2011. Also, Metro Ride is going to begin providing paratransit service directly as opposed to contracting out the service in 2012.

Cost-Saving Service Options (2012)

Due to the fiscal situation Metro Ride is facing in the coming years, the service will need to be modified to save costs. The service needs to be modified in such a way that the smallest number of current riders are impacted and the quality/desirability of the service remains intact. It also should be noted that whatever cost savings alternatives are implemented in the next year, the service is a valuable asset to the community and demand still exists in the region for service expansion. In the later years of the plan, service will be phased back in and it is

recommended that expansions be made to increase the regional nature of the service and to reflect the development patterns that have occurred in recent years and are anticipated in the near future including expanding service to Cedar Creek (weekdays), Rib Mountain, the new development around Aspirus Hospital (including the Women's Community)[4]. Other expansion items such as implementing Saturday service year round and extending the service span into the evening hours are also not included in this plan for a reduced budget. As noted, many of these expansion options merit strong consideration, but cannot be implemented in this economic climate.

In this section, service modifications are presented for weekdays and Saturdays – both in terms of scheduling and routing. Table F-2 is an overview of the cost-savings options that Metro Ride could implement to get the operating budget where it needs to be for 2012. Many combinations of options exist and recommended packages of modifications are presented in the following section.

All options are based on the operating cost per hour of $71.60 calculated earlier in this report. This is the fully allocated cost of service. Given that some costs such as administrative costs will not be saved through these service modifications, it is estimated that the cost savings would be approximately 10-15% lower than calculated using the fully allocated rate. These figures are used for sketch planning purposes only. Once the preferred service alternative is identified, a more detailed cost estimate will be developed.

The estimates are based on 255 weekdays in the service year and 40 Saturdays. Ridership impacts are also provided and are based on the on/off counts conducted as part of this study. The ridership impacts are *potential* impacts and mitigating factors are listed in the text that follows Table F-3. Once the preferred service alternative is identified, a ridership model will be developed to better estimate ridership impacts. At that point revenue impacts will also be discussed.

Each of the options listed in Table F-2 assumes that the system remains as-is except for the single modification for each option. The hours and cost savings are based on independent changes. In other words, the hours and cost savings for each option assume that only one option is implemented at a time and everything else continues as the system is currently operated.

[4] One trip generator that could be served with minor route modification is the Veteran's Center. Route I could be modified by reducing the size of the loop near Aspirus Hospital and operating the route down 32nd Avenue to Stewart Avenue in the inbound direction. This modification could be relatively easily accomplished and would serve another generator without increasing cost.

Table F-2: Service Modification Options

Service Modification	Daily Hours Saved	Annual Operating Cost Saved*	Potential Ridership Impact
Weekday (255 per year)			
Eliminate first trip of day	5	$91,290	28
Eliminate first trip & last trip of day	10	$182,580	70
Operate all routes on 60-minute off-peak headways	18	$328,644	N/A
Operate all routes on 60-minute headways all day	37.5	$684,675	N/A
Modify Route C and eliminate Route K	12.5	$228,225	8
Combine Routes B and D	12.25	$223,661	32
Combine Routes G and J	12.25	$223,661	20
Saturday (40 per year)			
Eliminate first trip of day	4.5	$12,888	24
Eliminate first trip & last trip of day	9	$25,776	42
Eliminate service	77.75	$222,676	832
Operate all routes on 60-minute headways all day	34	$97,376	N/A
Combine Routes F, L and K	8	$22,912	0
Combine Routes B and D	8.75	$25,060	0
Combine Routes G and J	8.75	$25,060	0

*Operating cost was calculated at $71.60 per revenue hour earlier in the study

Weekday Scheduling Options

Some weekday scheduling options for reducing operating budget are as follows:

- Remove the first trip of the day on weekdays
  - Currently 28 riders (1 percent of daily ridership) use the first trip of the day
  - Service would operate as is except the first pulse would be at 6:30 AM instead of 6:00 AM
  - Eight routes would be reduced by a half hour of service and one route would be reduced by an hour, so system-wide 5 hours per day would be reduced
  - Annual savings of $91,290
- Remove the first and last trip of the day on weekdays
  - Currently 70 riders (3 percent of daily ridership) use the first or last trip of the day
  - Service would operate as is except the first pulse would be at 6:30 AM instead of 6:00 AM and the last pulse would be at 5:30 PM instead of 6:00 PM
  - Eight routes would be reduced by one hour of service and one route would be reduced by two hours, so system-wide 10 hours per day would be reduced
  - Annual savings of $182,580
- Operate all routes except Route A on 60-minute headways during the mid-day off-peak period on weekdays
  - Route A remains on 30-minutes headways all day
  - Route C is currently operated on 60-minute headways
  - Route K is not included

    - Use the following route pairs for interlining
        - Routes B and H
        - Routes D and G
        - Routes I and J
    - Service would operate on 30-minute headways from 6 AM to 9 AM, then hourly until 3 PM, then on 30-minute headways again through the 6:30 PM
    - Saves 18 service hours per day (6 hours in the mid-day, reduces each of 6 routes by 3 hours)
    - Annual savings $328,644
- Operate all routes except Route A on 60-minute headways all day on weekdays
    - Route A remains on 30-minutes headways all day
    - Route C is currently operated on 60-minute headways
    - Route K is not included
    - Use the same pairs for interlining as with the off-peak headway reduction option
    - Saves 37.5 service hours per day (12.5 hour service day, reduces each of 6 routes by 6.25 hours)
    - Annual savings $684,675

Saturday Scheduling Options

Some Saturday scheduling options for reducing operating budget are as follows:

- Eliminate the first trip of the day on Saturdays
    - The first pulse of the day would be at 9:30 AM instead of 9:00 AM
    - Currently 24 riders use the first trip of the day on Saturdays (3% of total Saturday ridership)
    - Nine routes would be reduced by a half hour of service per day (Routes L and K count as one route), so 4.5 hours per Saturday would be reduced
    - Annual savings $12,888
- Eliminate the first and last trips of the day on Saturdays
    - The first pulse of the day would be at 9:30 AM instead of 9:00 AM and the service would end at the Transit Center at 5:00 PM instead of 5:30 PM
    - Currently 42 riders use either the first or the last trip of the day on Saturdays (5% of Saturday ridership)
    - Nine routes would be reduced by one hour of service per day (Routes L and K count as one route), so 9 hours per Saturday would be reduced
    - Annual savings $25,776
- Operate all routes except Route A on 60-minute headways on Saturdays
    - All routes would operate on 60-minute headways on Saturdays, which means that Routes L and K would operate on 120-minute headways because they are currently interlined
    - Route A would remain on 30-minute headways

  - Use the same interlining pairs as recommended on weekdays (B & H, D & G, I & J)
  - Annual savings $97,376
- Eliminate Saturday service
  - Currently 832 riders use the service on Saturdays during the school year
  - Annual savings $222,676

Weekday Routing Options

Some weekday routing options for reducing operating budget are as follows:

- Operate Route C with two legs and eliminate Route K on weekdays
  - Route C would follow its current routing one hour, then travel to the Corners and onto Weston and serve the retail areas on Schofield Avenue and St. Clare's Hospital and Marshfield Clinic Weston Center and return via the same routing the next hour
  - Currently the route is 16 miles long; the new leg would be 17 miles long. This extended length is still feasible because the new leg has fewer traffic signals and less congestion than the current leg.
  - Revenue hours reduced by 12.5 hours per weekday
  - Currently 8 riders board or alight at stops on Route K that would no longer be served by the new configuration
  - Annual savings of $228,225
- Combine Routes B and D on weekdays
  - The new route would head west on Route B, cross the river and go north on North 1st Avenue, then west on Bridge Street and north on 10th Avenue past West Wausau High School (Route D), then back east on Strowbridge Street and US Business 51 to head north again on North 1st Avenue to West Campus drive. The bus would serve NTC, then come back south on North 3rd Avenue, turn east on Bridge Street and south on North 3rd Street back to the Transit Center on the current Route D.
  - Currently Route B is 8 miles long and Route D is 7 miles long; the new route would be 7.78 miles long
  - Currently 32 riders board or alight at stops that would no longer be within a quarter mile of the new route. However, all of those stops are within a third of a mile of the new route.
  - Annual savings of $223,661
- Combine Routes G and J on weekdays
  - The new route would go south on the Current Route J on Prospect Avenue, then head west on Thomas Street, north on 17th Avenue, serve Shopko and John Muir Middle School on the current Route G, head back south on 17th Avenue and east on Sherman Street to 5th Avenue. Then the route would follow the current Route G back to the Transit Center along 5th Avenue and Stewart Avenue.

  - Currently Route G is 7 miles long and Route J is 7.8 miles long; the new route would be 7.1 miles long
  - Currently 20 riders board or alight at stops that would no longer be within a quarter mile of the new route. However, all of those stops are within a half a mile of the new route.
  - Annual savings of $223,661

Saturday Routing Options

Some Saturday routing options include:

- Combine Routes F, L and K on Saturdays to create a new route
  - Same as weekday modified Route C routing
  - Currently 8 riders board or alight at stops that would no longer be served by the modified route (all at the Cedar Creek Mall area)
  - Annual savings $22,912
- Combine Routes B and D on Saturdays
  - Same alignment as weekdays except the route would go out and around West Wausau High School and serve the popular bus stops on Randolph Street and Merrill Avenue.
  - No current riders are more than a quarter mile from the new route
  - The new route would be 8.6 miles
  - Annual savings $25,060
- Combine Routes G and J on Saturdays
  - Same alignment as weekdays
  - No current riders are more than a quarter mile from the new route
  - Annual savings $25,060

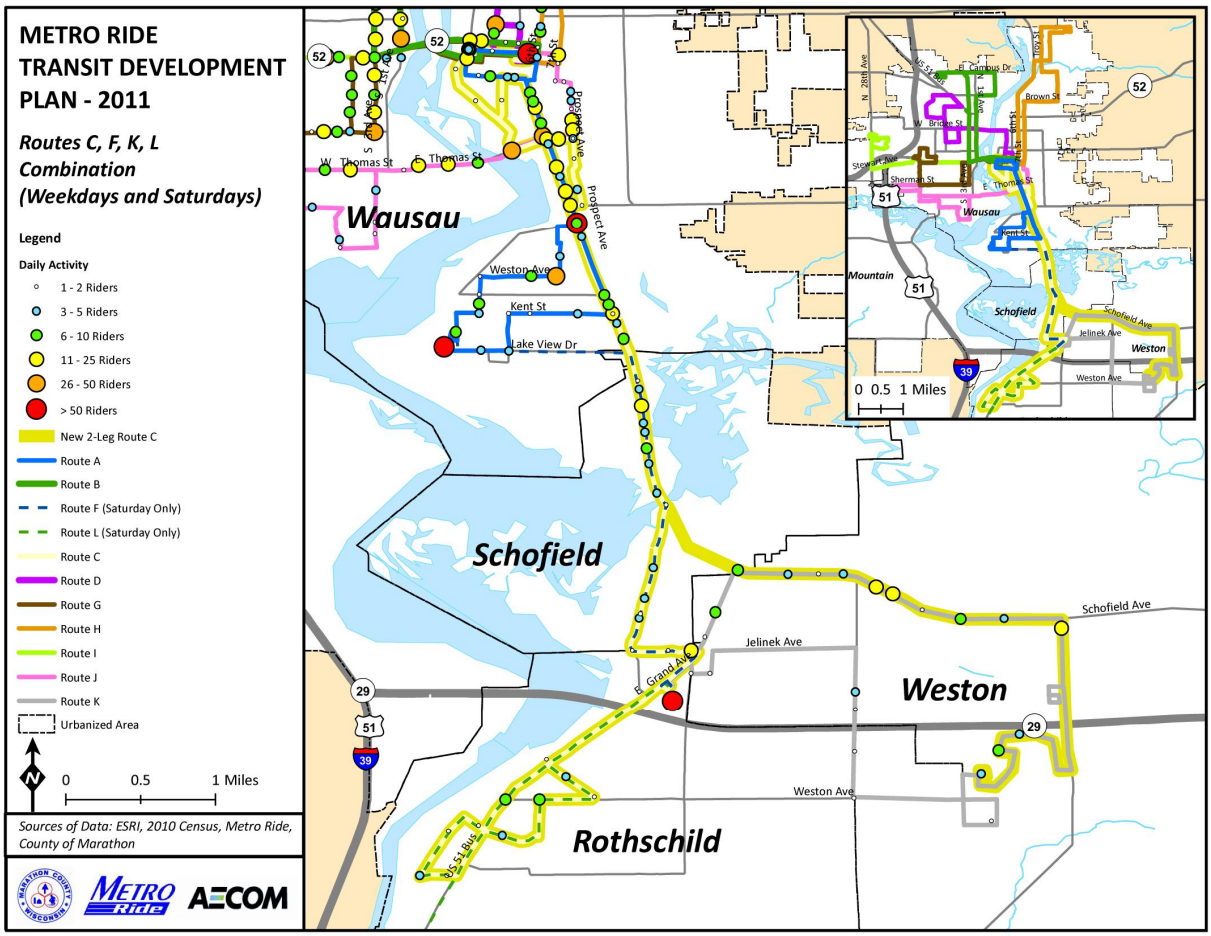
Packages of Cost-Saving Service Alternatives

Many options exist for combining potential service modifications to reach the target budget for 2012. Packages of options are described in this section including pros and cons of each package. The base change for all packages is the modification of Route C to serve Weston and the elimination of Route K as it is currently operated. The modified Route C would serve Weston, Schofield and Rothschild using two legs on weekdays and Saturdays with 120-minute headways.

Currently two buses are used to operate Routes C and K on weekdays and Routes F, L, and K on Saturdays. Routes C and K are each operated for 12.5 hours on weekdays and Routes K and L (interlined) and Route F are operated for 8.5 hours on Saturdays. Route K has been under scrutiny by the Village of Weston and this study team was asked to look at options to continue service to Weston while reducing operating costs. After analyzing the ridership activity on Routes C, K, F, and L for weekdays and Saturdays, it was determined that it is feasible to

operate a modified Route C on two legs without drastically impacting ridership. See Figure F-1 for a map of the proposed modification.

Figure F-1: Proposed Route C, F, L, K Modification



The pros and cons for this action are as follows:

- *Pros for combining Routes C, F, L, and K*
    - This routing significantly reduces the cost to the Village of Weston while maintaining service to the community
    - Two-way service along the Schofield Avenue corridor in Weston is now provided
    - The routing is more direct
    - The modified route serves most of the major bus stops (based on current ridership) and avoids the areas of low utilization
    - The modified route is the same on both weekdays and Saturdays
    - The result is a savings of 12.5 weekday and 8 Saturday hours, which corresponds to a savings of $250,000 annually for the Metro Ride system

- *Cons for combining Routes C, F, L and K*
    - The route is only operated every two hours on the legs. The trunk of the route is still operated hourly.
    - The two legs do not connect at Shopko
    - No Saturday service to Cedar Creek

All packages build upon a system that excludes Route K and routing options assume the scheduling changes recommended in the same package are implemented. In other words, the hours reduction and cost savings in the packages may not match the list of options from the previous section because the list of options above assumed that each change happened independently. The packages of changes listed below are groups of changes that may impact each other in terms of hours and cost savings.

Not all of the options listed in the previous section are recommended for implementation in a package. The option to operate 60-minute service all day on weekdays and on Saturdays was not furthered because of the confusion associated with interlining and the extended wait times at the Transfer Center for some route pairings. Metro Ride has attempted a similar approach in the past with mixed results. The confusion is not worth the cost savings. Also, reducing core service frequency in a city setting reduces the perceived usefulness of the service to new riders.

Package 1: Reduced Service Span (First and Last Trip) with Modified Saturday Route Structure (Combining Routes B & D, G & J)

The first combination of service options reduces the service span on weekdays and Saturdays and establishes a reduced route network on Saturday similar to the structure proposed during the previous study along with the Routes C, F, L and K modifications. Figures F-2 and F-3 are maps of what the system would look like if Package 1 options are implemented.

The first and last trip of the day on weekdays and Saturdays would be eliminated. This would save 9 hours on weekdays and 8 hours on Saturdays. Operating the combined routes as described above (B & D and G & J) on Saturdays would save 8 hours per combination route. The modifications in this package would save $482,763 annually based on the hours saved the fully allocated cost of service.

Pros and cons of implementing Package 1 are listed below and also include the pros and cons of the Routes C, F, L, K modifications listed previously:

- *Pros for Package 1*
    - Minimal change to weekday service (and no coverage change)
    - Saturday structure uses fewer buses and is a more efficient service
    - Coverage to the most utilized areas is maintained on Saturdays
    - Headways are maintained on weekdays and Saturdays
    - On Saturdays Routes A, H, and I remain the same

- *Cons for Package 1*
    - Small reduction in service span
    - The Saturday route combinations are somewhat less direct than the existing routes

Figure F-2: Proposed Metro Ride System with Route C (F & L) & K Modifications

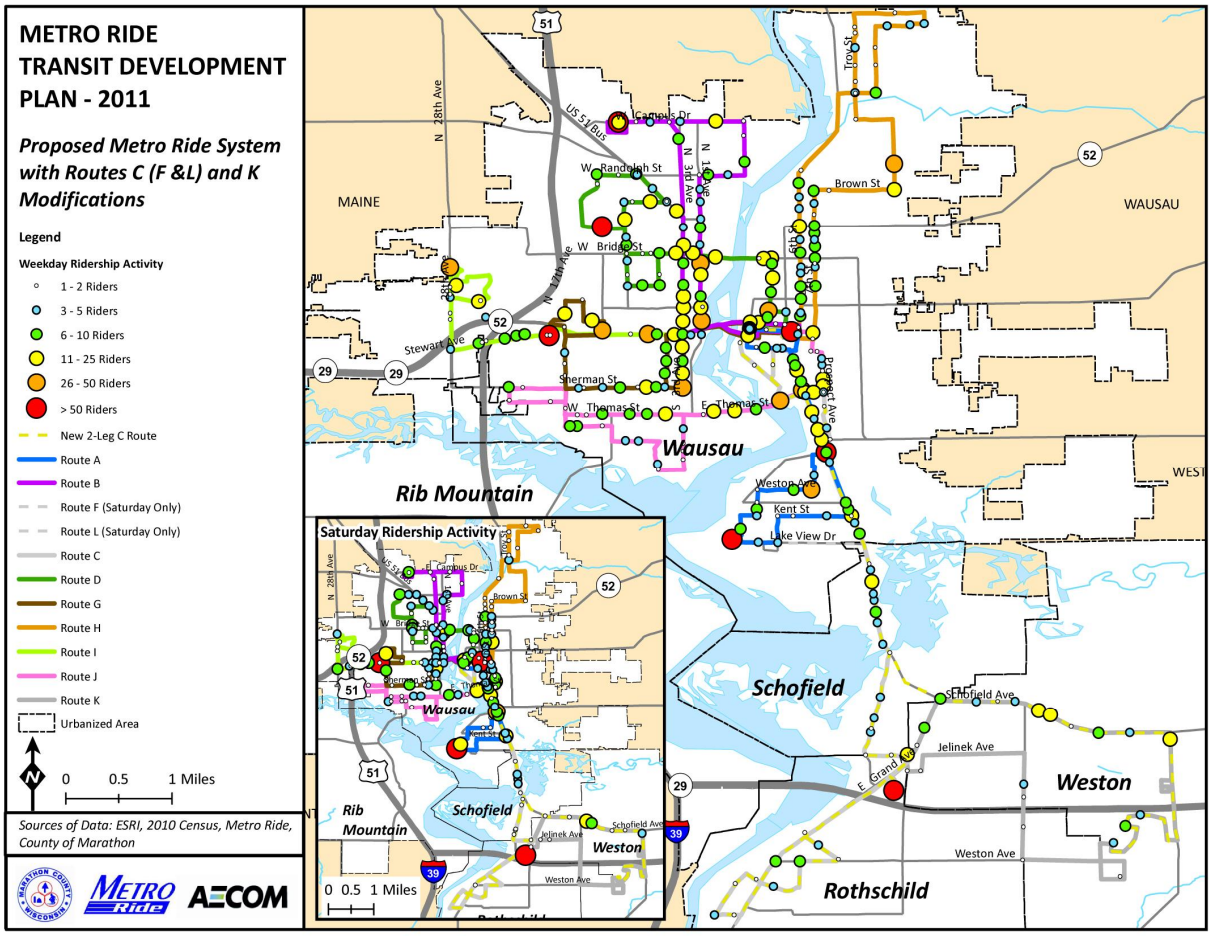
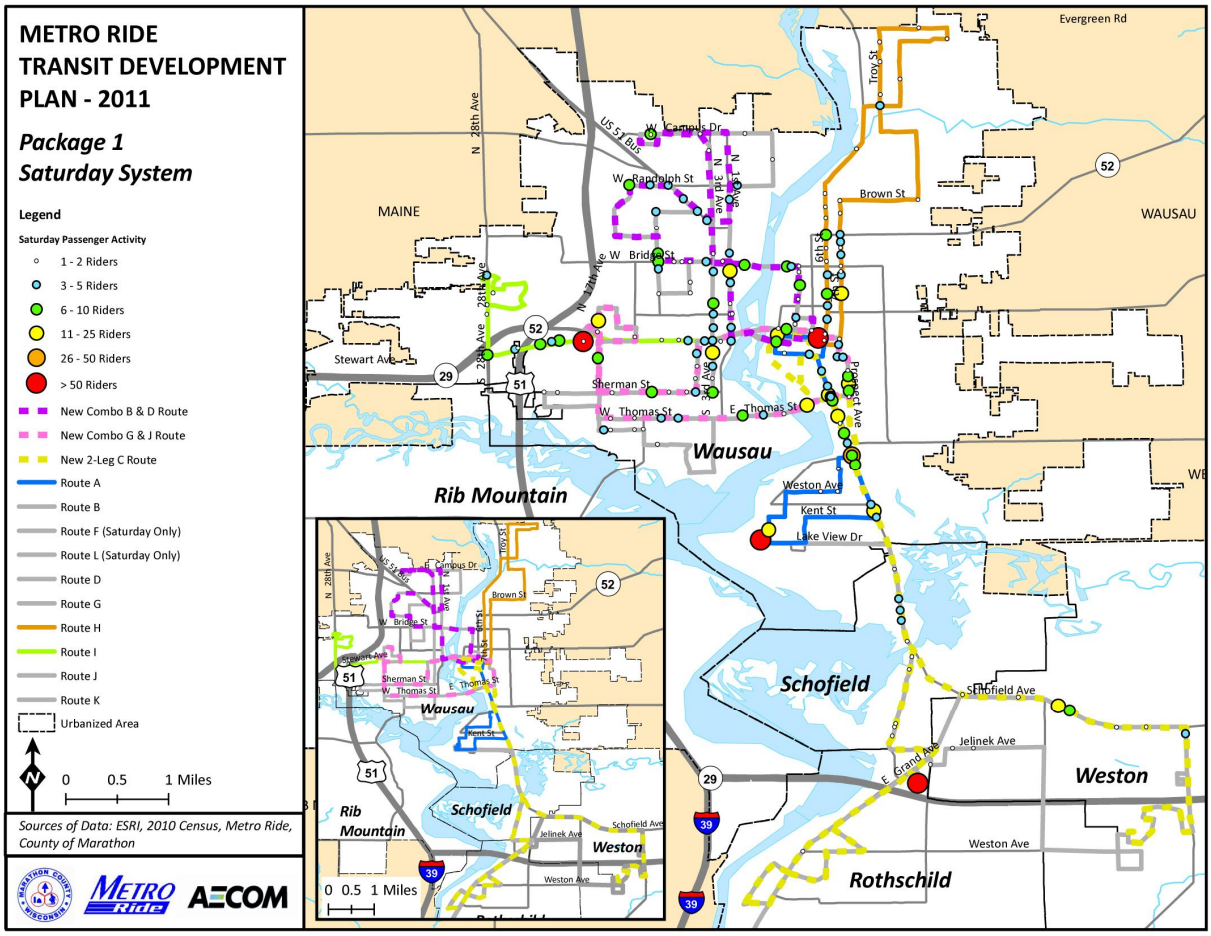


Figure F-3: Proposed Saturday System with Routes F, L, K, Routes B & D, and Routes G & J Combination Modifications



Package 2: Mid-Day Weekday Service Frequency Reduction

The second combination reduces mid-day service frequency on Routes B, D, G, H, I, and J to 60-minutes on weekdays from 9 AM until 3 PM. Route A would remain on 30-minute headways all day. Route K would be eliminated and the modified Route C (F & L) would operate on 120-minute headways to Weston and Schofield/Rothschild on weekdays (and Saturdays). Figure F-2 is a map of the proposed Metro Ride system on both weekdays and Saturdays with the Package 2 elements (the same routing as Package 1).

This package of options would save $579,781 in operating costs annually based on the hours saved and the fully allocated cost of service. Operating mid-day 60-minute service would save 18 hours per day (3 hours saved per 6 bus routes). Pros and cons of implementing Package 2 are listed below:

- *Pros for Package 2*
    - With just one adjustment beyond the base Routes C (F & L) and K modification, the necessary cost saving is achieved
    - Complete coverage and service span are maintained
    - No impact on directness

- *Cons for Package 2*
    - Off-peak headways would be reduced
    - Off-peak routes would be interlined and the wait time at the Transit Center may be a half hour because not all routes are operated from every pulse (though attempts have been made to minimize this situation with through-routing)

Package 3: Weekday and Saturday Route Modifications

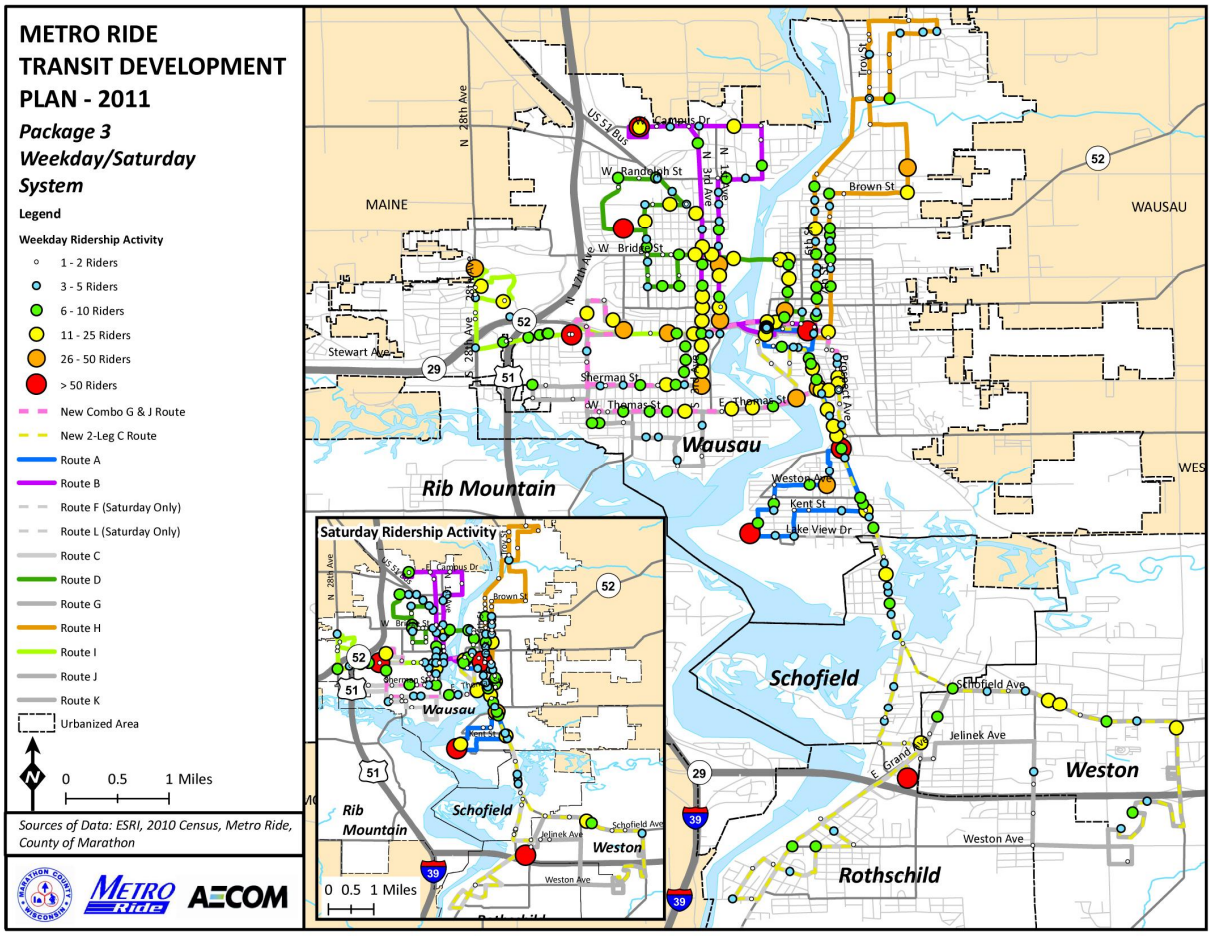
Based on the service evaluation conducted as part of this study, it was shown there are opportunities to combine two routes into one route at a small reduction in service coverage and directness but with limited impact to current ridership. Both Routes B and D and Routes G and J could be combined into single routes and still serve the most popular destinations along each route. However, both combinations would not need to be implemented in order to reach the level of cost savings needed for the 2012 budget. Therefore, Routes G and J would be combined into a new route in Package 3. Routes G and J are a better opportunity because some destinations on Route G are also served directly by Route I, the southern portion of Route J is underutilized, and Routes B and D show better stand-alone ridership. The modified route would continue to operate on 30-minute headways (i.e. it is a new route; the existing routes are not interlined). Figure F-4 is a map of the weekday and Saturday system with the proposed route combinations.

Implementing the modified route structure would save $499,858 annually based on the hours saved and the fully allocated cost of service. Each of the combinations would save approximately 12 hours on weekdays and 8 hours on Saturdays. The pros and cons of implementing Package 3 are listed below:

- *Pros for Package 3*
    - The Metro Ride system would have the same route structure on Saturdays as on weekdays
    - The required savings would be achieved with minimal impact to weekday and Saturday service
    - Service span and headways would be maintained
    - Service coverage would be maintained in the most heavily utilized areas

- *Cons for Package 3*
    - Service coverage would be somewhat reduced in southwest Wausau
    - The route combinations are somewhat less direct than the existing routes

Figure F-4: Proposed Weekday/Saturday System with Routes C (F & L) & K and Routes G & J Combinations



Selected Service Option for 2012

Given the potential service modifications and budgetary constraints, the Transit Commission decided a reduced service option would be implemented in 2012. Details of the selected option are provided in this section. Due to loss of municipal funding, transit service will no longer be provided in Weston, Rothschild or Schofield. Additionally, paratransit service will be operated by Metro Ride starting in 2012; it will no longer be contracted out.

Modifications to the current Metro Ride system include the following:

- Routes C and K will be eliminated
- Saturday service will be eliminated
- The first trip of the day will be eliminated

The cost and ridership impacts of the reduced system are as described below. The three major modifications are discussed below as a package (each change takes the other changes into consideration), so the cost savings can be viewed cumulatively. Cost savings listed below are based on the sketch figures used to describe potential service options in the previous sections. The impacts are as follows:

- Eliminate Routes C and K
    - Route C (12 weekday hours)
        - Currently 228 riders utilize Route C on weekdays
        - Some of this route will continue to be covered by Route A
    - Route K (12 weekday hours)
        - Currently 97 riders utilize Route K on weekdays
    - Annual savings of $438,192
- Eliminate Saturday service
    - Currently 832 riders use the service on Saturdays during the school year
    - Annual savings $222,676
- Remove the first trip of the day on weekdays
    - Currently 28 riders (1 percent of daily ridership) use the first trip of the day
    - Service would operate as-is except the first pulse would be at 6:30 AM instead of 6:00 AM
    - Eight routes would be reduced by a half hour of service and one route would be reduced by an hour, so system-wide 5 hours per day would be reduced
    - Annual savings of $91,290

The total annual savings for these service modifications is estimated to be approximately $750,000.

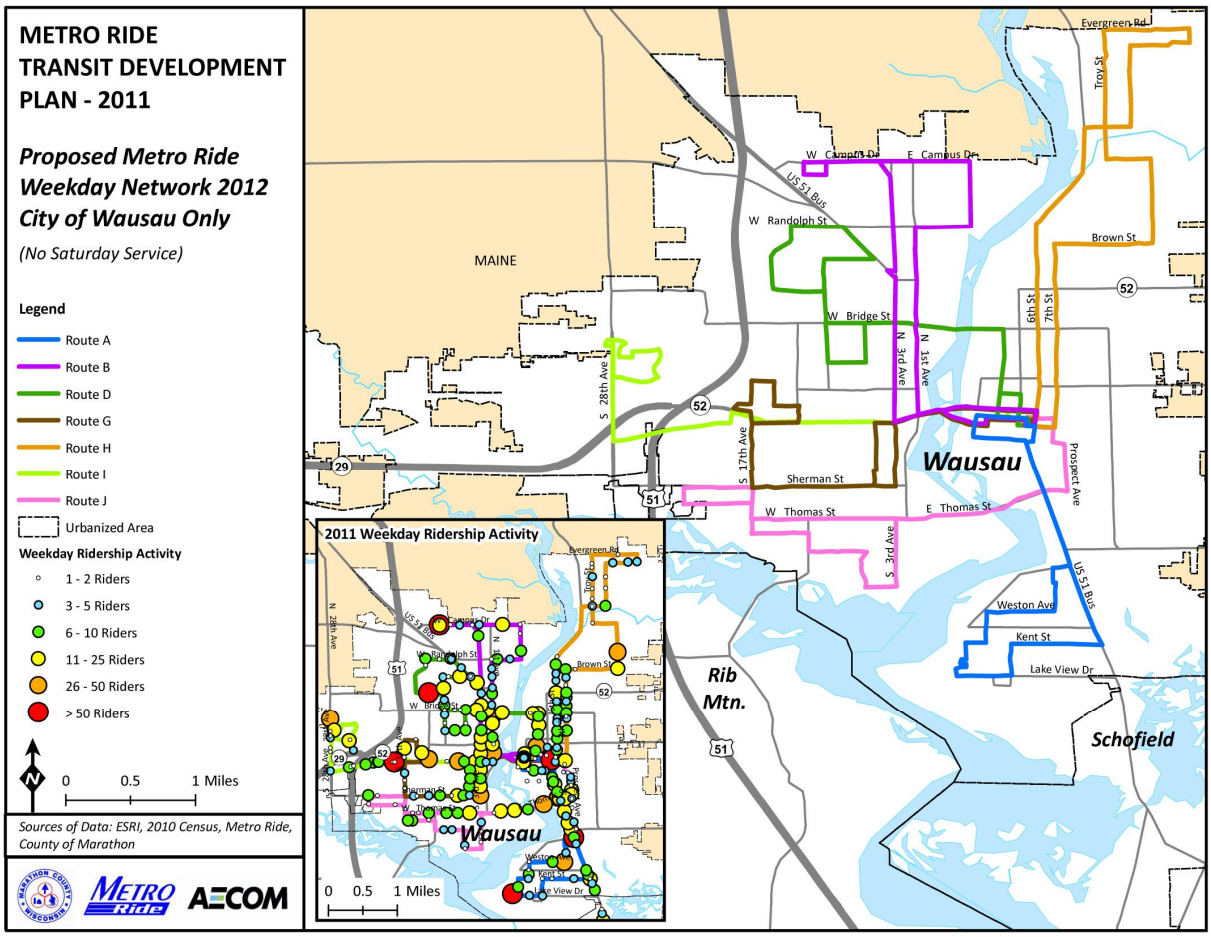
The pros and cons of this service package are as follows:

- *Pros for Selected Service Package*
  - Headways are maintained on weekdays
  - Fixed route and paratransit service is still provided in Wausau
  - Part of the eliminated Route C is still served by Route A
  - Only a small reduction in weekday service span

- *Cons for Selected Service Package*
  - Regional service coverage is eliminated
  - Major regional trip generators are no longer served
  - No Saturday service

The new Metro Ride system is shown in Figure F-5. Service, both fixed route and paratransit, will only be provided within Wausau city limits.

Figure F-5: Proposed 2012 Metro Ride Fixed Route Network



Selected Fare Increase

The Transit Commission also approved a fare increase effective January 1, 2012. Table F-3 shows the new fare structure compared to the existing structure. A public hearing was held on December 1, 2011 to discuss the proposed fare increase. The Transit Commission voted to approve the fare increase later that month.

Table F-3: 2012 Fare Structure

Fare Media	Current Fare	2012 Fare
ADULTS		
Cash	$1.25	$1.50
Tokens	10 for $7.50	10 for $9.00
Monthly Pass	$30.00	$36.00
ELDERLY/DISABLED		
Cash	$0.60	$0.75
Monthly Pass	$15.00	$18.00
STUDENTS		
Cash	$1.00	$1.25
Tickets	10 for $6.00	10 for $7.50
School District Tickets	$0.60	$0.75
Monthly Pass	$15.00	$18.00
PARATRANSIT		
Cash	$2.00	$2.25

During the public input section of this study, a fare increase was not (by itself) perceived negatively. However, with the accompanying service reductions, the fare increase will probably contribute somewhat to reduced ridership in 2012.

Phasing Plan for 2013-2016

The later years of the plan show anticipated increases in the operating budget every year, with the budget again reaching the 2011 level by the end of the 5-year period. Budgets and recommended phasing of re-instated service elements and service expansions are listed for years 2 through 5 of the plan (through 2016) below.

As was discussed in the previous Transit Development Plan in 2005/2006, it is important for Metro Ride to grow along with the metropolitan area. Retaining service in the communities Metro Ride serves and expanding to other local communities where transit service demand exists contributes to the goal of implementing a regional transit network.

Year 2013

The 2013 budget is projected to be higher than the 2012 budget, but it is recommended that the service remain at 2012 levels and to avoid any further cuts.

Year 2014

In year 3, it is recommended that a year-round condensed Saturday route network be implemented.

Year 2015

In the fourth year, service to Schofield, Rothschild, Weston and Rib Mountain should be revisited.

Year 2016

In the fifth year, service hours should be re-expanded and service to any of the towns not re-introduced/introduced in the previous year should be revisited. The fifth year system should look more like the regional transit network needed in a growing metropolitan area.

Potential Funding Options

Given the shortage of funding at all levels of government at present, and the uncertainty of state and federal funding levels going forward, Metro Ride, like many other transit properties in the country, needs to investigate more reliable and sustaining funding resources. As it stands today, Metro Ride has had to make serious cuts in service to stay within its current means, which undermines its ability to meet the transportation needs of the community, particularly of those who depend upon Metro Ride as their sole source of transportation. Some potential sources of funding, some of which would likely require legislation at the state level, that might be pursued are as follows:

- The introduction of U-Passes to the colleges and universities in the area. Priced properly, the U-Pass provides a guaranteed source of revenue against which all students would have free access to the system without cutting into the revenues currently collected from those students who use the system. U-Pass funding usually comes from student activity fees, but could also be shared by the schools themselves.

- The introduction of special taxes on hotel rooms or rental cars are two potential sources that are largely paid by non-Wausau residents and business persons in particular. The occupancy tax could be as low as one or dollars per night per room, and is common for funding a range of transit and non-transit actions around the country, and is generally accepted as the price of doing business for visitors. Similarly, a tax on rental cars impacts, for the most part, the same individuals with the same potential for revenue enhancement for Metro Ride.

- A property conveyance tax, used by some New York State properties and built into RTA legislation there, is another source of funding, although it can be volatile as the housing market expands and contracts.

The creation of a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) would be an excellent organizational strategy for developing a sound funding base going forward. Formation of an RTA requires state legislation and has clearly been a contentious issue in Wisconsin but it offers the best solution for developing both a sustainable plan as well as a truly regional system. With the completion of this project, the Metro Ride system is operated entirely within the City of Wausau, as no other community has funded its operation out of general funds in their current budgets. An RTA would have the ability to create new funding streams such as those listed above, or from revenue gained from a small increase in the local sales tax or other sources, and could then use these funds to provide a truly regional network once again. Clearly, an RTA could only succeed if there is a great deal of upfront planning and discussion, but its implementation could greatly benefit the community and those who truly need bus service as their sole means of mobility.

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