

How Do We Plan for Transit?

JACKIE EASTWOOD, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER

LA CROSSE AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE (LAPC)
MPO FOR THE LA CROSSE AND LA CRESCENT URBANIZED AREA

WISCONSIN TRANSIT ALLIANCE, APRIL 30, 2018

Overview

Background and duties of the LAPC

Transit services in the La Crosse area

Transit Planning at the LAPC

Required Elements for Providing Transit Service

Challenges for Transit

What is the LAPC?

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

LAPC Organization

Metropolitan planning organization (MPO)

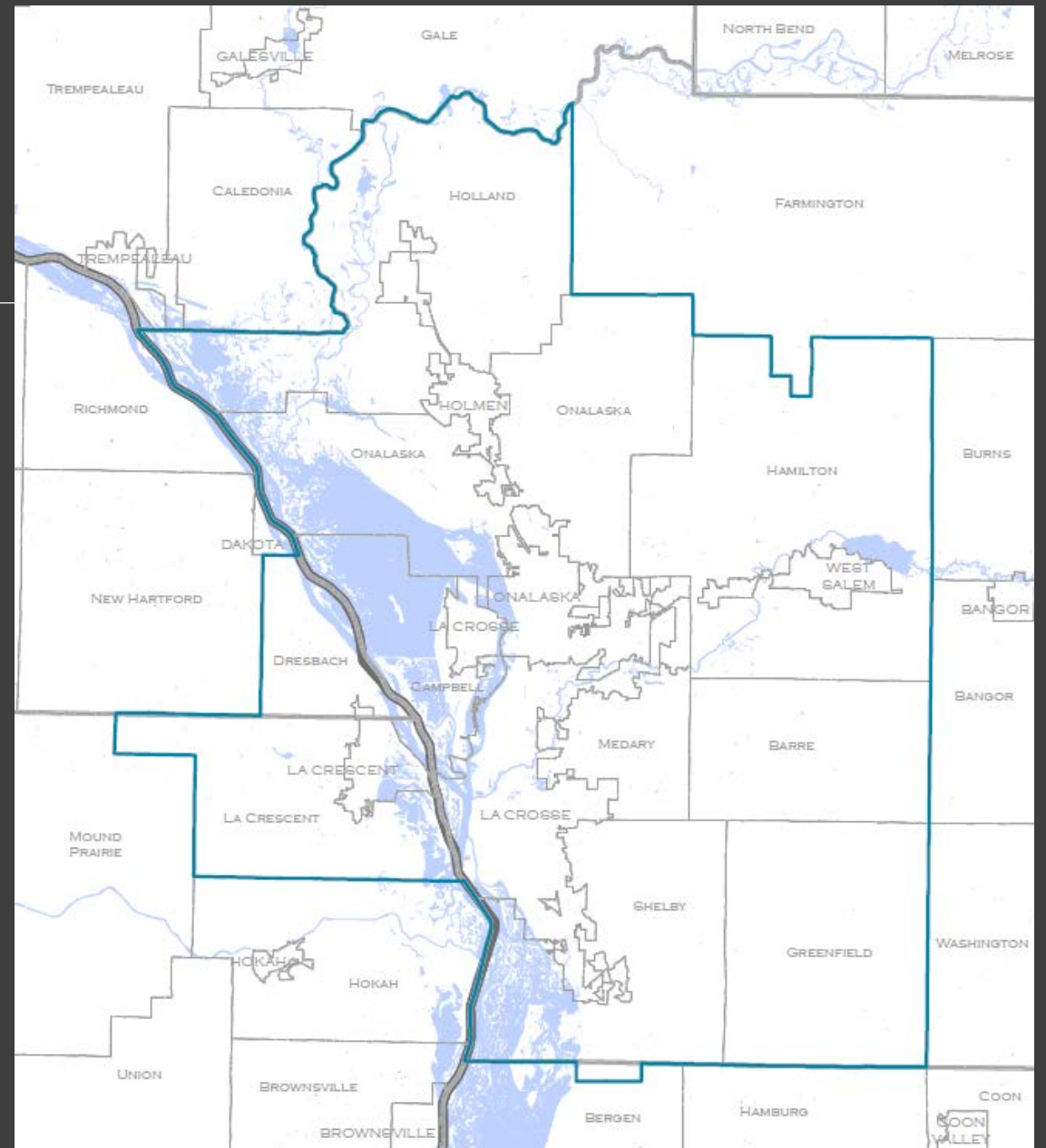
- Federal transportation bill
- Urbanized areas of 50,000 people or more

Bi-State MPO

- Wisconsin and Minnesota

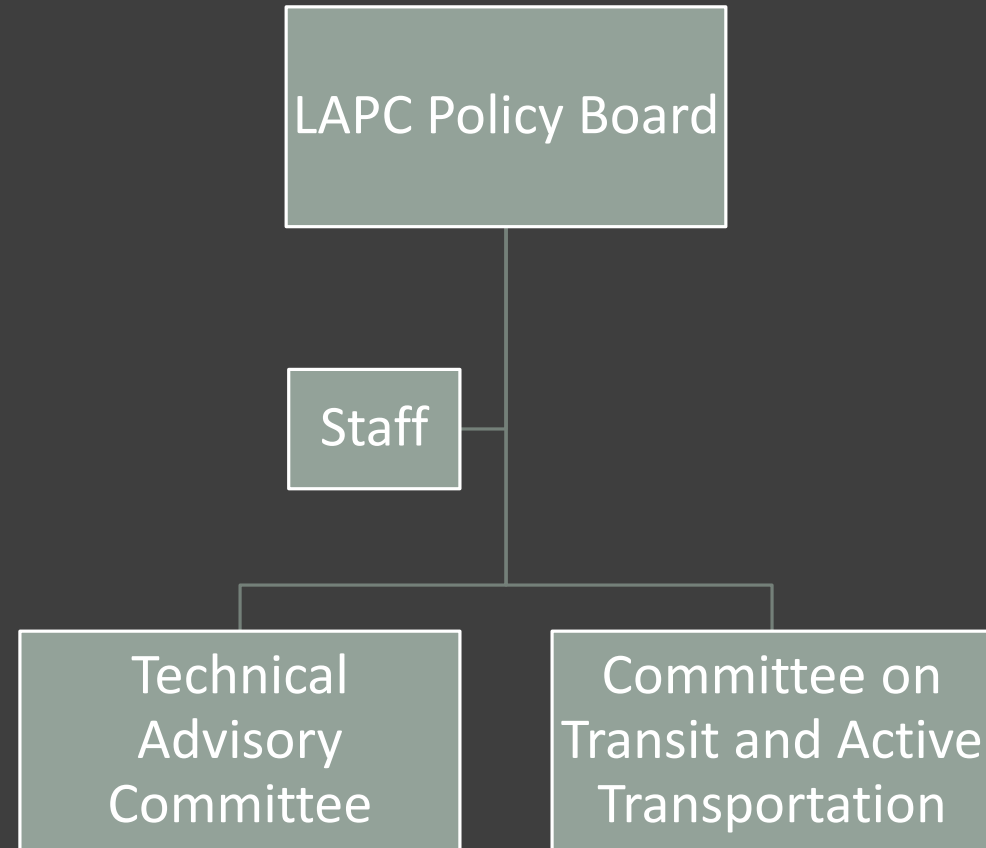
Classified as a small MPO (<200,000 people)

- About 118,000 people
- Can't apply for most grants
- No regulatory authority
- Don't receive federal funds directly—comes through States



LAPC Structure

We are advisory
ONLY!
We facilitate &
coordinate!



LAPC Duties

Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Transportation Improvement Program

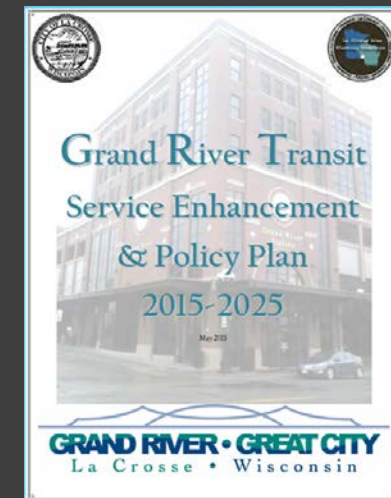
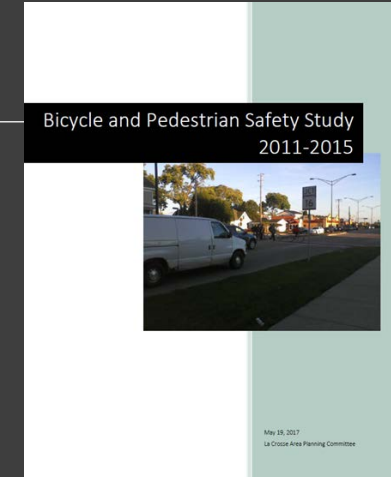
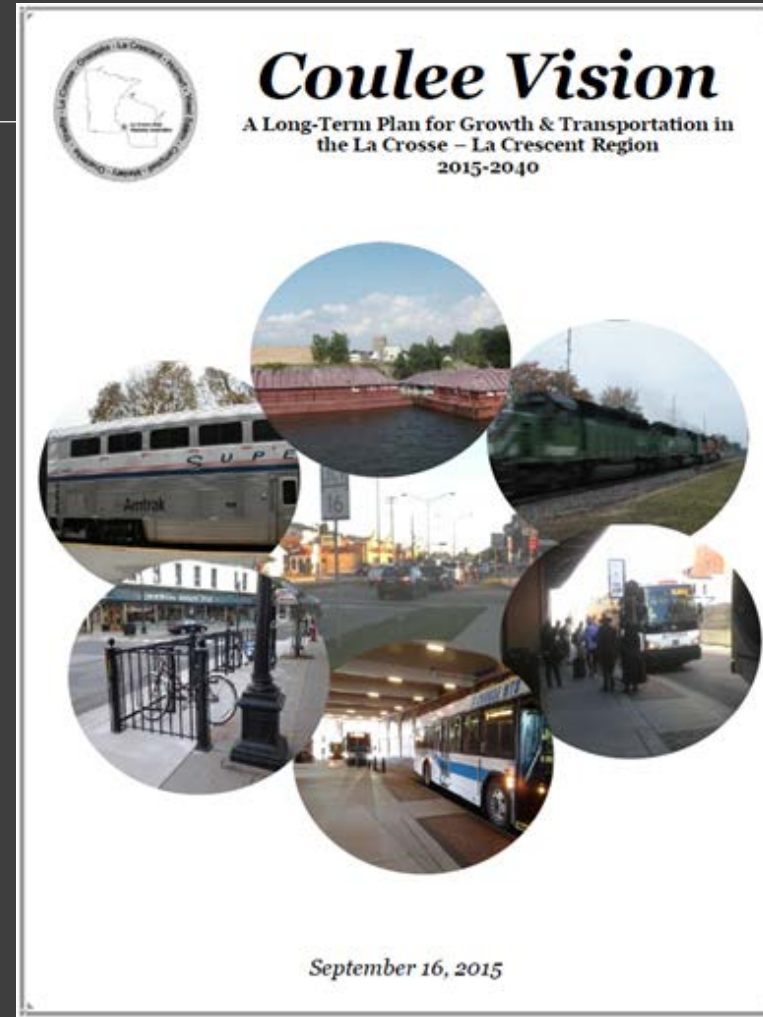
Planning Work Program

Public Participation Plan

Title VI Plan

Modal studies and plans

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Study
- Transit Development Plan for MTU



Transit Services in the La Crosse Area

History of Transit in La Crosse

1879 – businessmen began privately-owned horse-drawn system

1893-1923 – Horse-drawn system converted to electrified streetcar system

1929-1935 – Streetcar routes converted to bus routes

Privately-owned until 1974 when the City of La Crosse purchased the La Crosse Transit Company

La Crosse MTU began operations in 1975



Current General Public Transit Services

La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility (MTU)

- Owned and operated as a department within the City of La Crosse

Onalaska/Holmen/West Salem Public Transit (OHWSPT)

- Administered by the City of Onalaska
- Contracted with a private provider
- Began in 1999

Scenic Mississippi River Transit (SMRT)

- Administered by the City of Prairie du Chien
- Contracted with a private provider
- Began in 2012



La Crosse MTU

Nine fixed routes

- Five City routes that operate 7 days per week
- One City route that operates weekdays only
- Three contract routes (renewed annually)
 - La Crescent, MN (1998): Weekdays and Saturdays
 - City of Onalaska (1999): Weekdays only
 - French Island & La Crosse Airport (2000): Weekdays only

Deviated fixed-route and complementary paratransit

Free transfers between MTU and OHWSPT

Allows SMRT to use MTU bus stops

Jefferson Lines bus bay at GRS

Bike racks on all buses; bike racks and lockers at GRS



Onalaska/Holmen/West Salem Public Transit (OHWSPT)

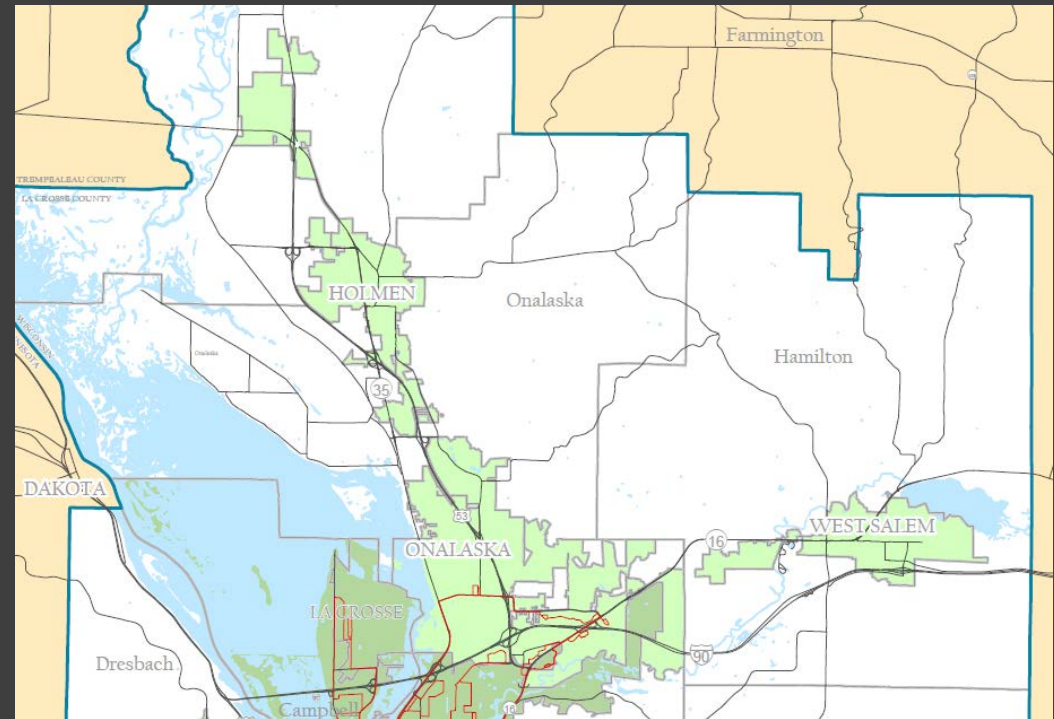
Door-to-door shared-ride taxi service operating 7 days per week

Origin and destination need to be in the City of Onalaska, the Village of Holmen, or the Village of West Salem

Free transfers from/to MTU at Center 90 and Valley View Mall

City of Onalaska initiates RFP for a shared-ride service provider every five years

- Running, Inc has had the contract since inception in 1999



Scenic Mississippi Regional Transit (SMRT)

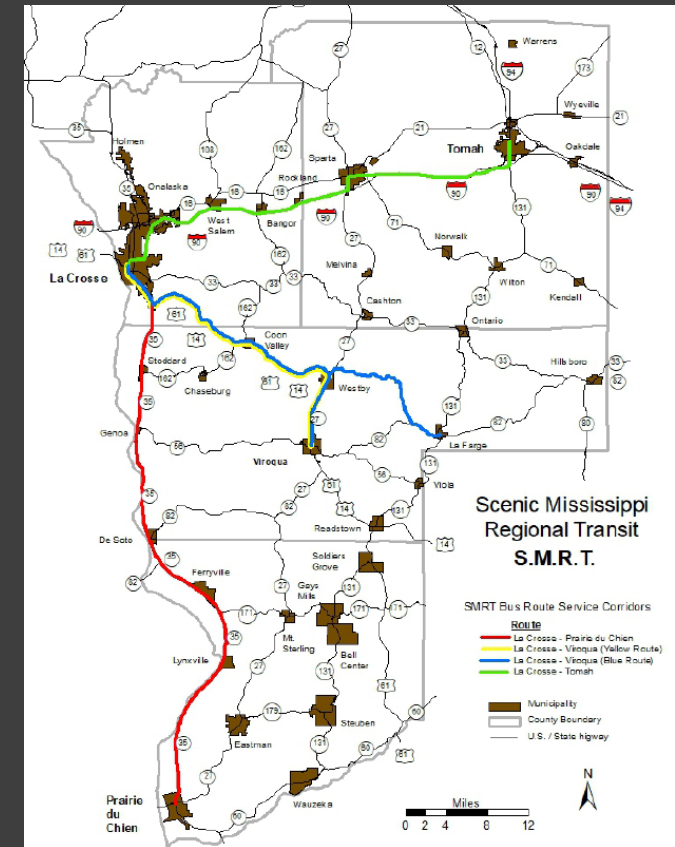
Regional fixed routes:

- Prairie du Chien – La Crosse (Dec 2012)
- LaFarge/Viroqua – La Crosse (Dec 2012)
- Tomah – La Crosse (Oct 2017)

Funded through the 5311 Rural Program

Multi-jurisdictional support

Looking to expand to Arcadia



Other Regional Transportation Services

JEFFERSON BUS LINES

Designated bus stop at Grand River Station

Ticket agent



AMTRAK

No direct MTU bus service



Transit Planning at the LAPC

Local Transit Planning

LA CROSSE MTU TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Operations and performance

Availability and access

- Service frequency and hours
- Coverage (transit-supportive areas)
 - Contracted service
- Multimodal connections
- Environmental (social) justice

Comfort and convenience

Density Criteria

- 60-minute service
 - 4-9 jobs per acre
 - 3-6 households per acre
- 30-minute service
 - > 9 jobs per acre
 - > 6 households per acre



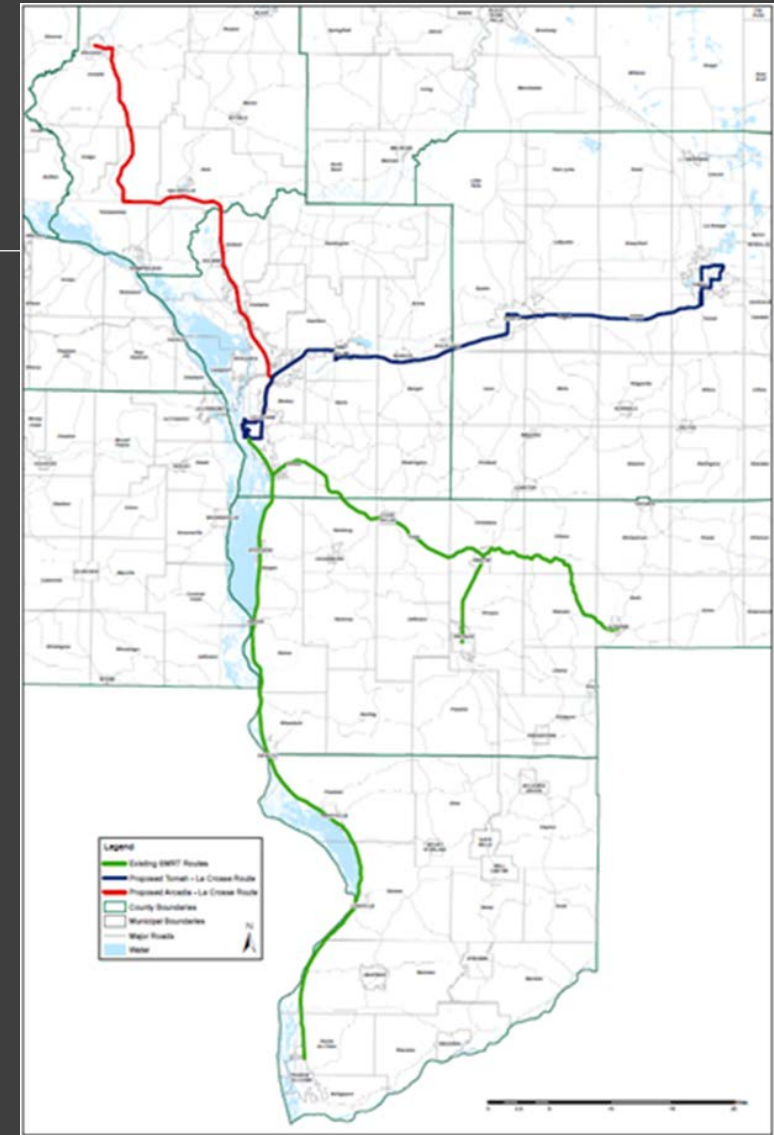
Regional Transit Planning

COMMUTER BUS SERVICE FEASIBILITY PLAN

Expansion of SMRT to Arcadia and Tomah

Tomah route implemented as pilot in October 2017

MRRPC, LAPC, La Crosse County, and UW Extension



Regional Transit Planning

TWIN CITIES-MILWAUKEE-CHICAGO (TCMC) INTERCITY PASSENGER RAIL SERVICE STUDY

LAPC provided \$40,000 in support in 2017

WisDOT and MnDOT are requesting \$40,000 in 2018 to help fund phase 2

- NEPA work
- Service Development Plan



Regional Transit Planning

TWIN CITIES TO MILWAUKEE HIGH-SPEED RAIL CORRIDOR

Staff participates in technical committees:

- Minnesota Passenger Rail Forum
- Minnesota High-Speed Rail Commission
- Twin Cities-to-Milwaukee HSR Corridor
- Midwest Rail Plan



Required Elements for Providing Transit Service

Local Sponsor



Federal and State Funding

Program	Description	Federal/State Share
Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339)	Federal discretionary grant for capital	80%
Federal Formula Grant for Rural Areas (5311)	Capital, planning, and operating assistance to states for public transit in rural areas with populations less than 50,000	80% capital; 50% operating; 80% paratransit
Federal Formula Grant for Urbanized Areas (5307)	Capital assistance for large areas (>200,000); capital and operating assistance for areas with 50,000-200,000 people	80% capital; 50% operating
State Urban Mass Transit Operating Assistance (85.20)	State operating assistance; often combined with the 5307	80%
Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance	Program to connect low-income workers with jobs	80% capital; 50% operating

Local Match



Percentage of project cost

- Generally 20% for capital and 50% for operations

Can come from multiple sources

- Municipalities
- Businesses
- Non-profits

Service Provider



Contracted through a competitive bid process

- Required at least every 5 years



Challenges for Transit

Local Support

Competition with other needs and goals

- Capital budgets

Sustainable source of funding

- Operations
- Vehicle maintenance and replacement

Naysayers and nimbys



Political Will and Priorities



Questions? Questions? Questions?

Questions?



Questions?

Questions? Questions? Questions?