Dear Friends,

1000 Friends is all about making connections. We make the connections between transportation, sustainable communities, and green infrastructure all resulting in healthier communities, environmental protection and economic development. In order to be most effective we know it’s important for us to make connections with other organizations, businesses, and members to build coalitions to get the job done! In this issue of Landscapes you’ll see how we’re working across the state with many partners in order to have a greater impact.

It’s a tough time both in Wisconsin and nationally for the environment. But - we’re not about to sit back and wait for change.

We’ll continue to:
• fight for accessible and affordable transit for everyone
• make sure local officials understand the importance of funding local grassroots organizations who are on the ground doing the work
• travel across the state engaging community members to make decisions locally that protect natural resources and promote smart growth in the places they live, work and play
• bring people together, listen to their concerns and help find solutions.

Together we’ll make sure our natural resources, accessible transportation and healthy communities are a priority in Wisconsin. We appreciate your continued support!

All the best,
Deb

The Big Share

MARCH 6, 2018
12AM - 11:59PM

We invite you to participate in this ONE DAY giving opportunity! Participating organizations have a chance to win additional prizes and cash throughout the day depending on their donations. To donate go to: thebigshare.org
Regional Transit Authorities - Time to Reconsider

Too many people are being left behind.

How do you get to work, go to your doctor’s appointment, visit your family and friends if you can’t drive a car? Many people in Wisconsin are left behind due to disability, lack of financial resources, age and location.

Businesses around the state are facing workforce shortages in part due to arbitrary boundaries that interrupt transit lines and make it impossible for employees to access jobs. A lack of access to transportation is one of the biggest factors keeping people trapped in a cycle of poverty. Providing reliable, affordable and efficient regional public transit options allows qualified workers in neighborhoods currently lacking transportation options to access well-paying jobs.

The number of citizens left stranded will continue to grow as our population ages, as young people increasingly prefer non-driving transportation, and as income inequity worsens.

What caused this crisis? Wisconsin’s history of underfunding public transportation. The 2018 state budget allocated $791 million for major highway development and only $110 million for public transit. Funding for public transit has not been increased in over a decade.

As a result, transit systems across the state are struggling to staff bus routes, keep existing services running and maintain their vehicles.

It’s time for a new transportation future in Wisconsin—one where we move away from harmful and wasteful highway expansions of the past and invest the savings into world class public transportation. How do we pay for the capital investment needed to buy buses, build light and high speed rail systems and create land uses that foster transit ridership?

One tried and proven solution that allows communities more control over their transportation decision-making is the creation of Regional Transportation Authorities (RTA). RTAs are governing bodies that consists of villages, towns and municipalities in a region who come together to raise money by taxing themselves. RTAs have many advantages—they allow transportation decisions to be made on a regional basis and increase coordination among different transit agencies; they provide the financial muscle to make bold investments in public transportation; and they provide a solid and predictable flow of revenue.

There are many examples of successful RTAs in the Midwest that have reinvigorated neighborhoods, helped thousands get to jobs, education and healthcare and reduced traffic congestion and fatalities. Metro Transit in Minnesota covers a 7 county region in and around Minneapolis and St. Paul and operates light rail lines and bus routes through an RTA providing over 85 million rides per year. In Cuyahoga County, Ohio, the Greater Cleveland RTA provides over 45 million rail and bus rides annually.

New capital investment in rapid transit lines has a wealth of benefits, including making the transit corridors more desirable and bringing a whole new set of customers to local businesses.

The Wisconsin legislature banned RTAs in 2011. It’s time the state overturned the ban and gave more transportation decision making control back to our communities.

Many cities across the state have ambitious plans in place for modern transit. The fight must go on for more local control, economic opportunity, job creation and healthy communities.

For more information on RTAs: 1kfriends.org/top-5-reasons-need-rtas-2018/

Are there a lack of transportation options in your community?

Please share your stories with us at: friends@1kfriends.org
ATTACK ON WETLANDS

AB 547/SB 600 eliminates state permit protections for more than one million acres of “isolated,” non-federal wetlands. The measure takes away DNR authority to assess the ecological impact of isolated wetlands before they can be filled and land developed. After a great deal of pushback from conservationists and sportspeople, an amended version passed out of committee. The amended bill promotes sprawl by removing protection of state jurisdictional wetlands in every city and village in Wisconsin, including areas within a one-mile radius of municipalities, all sewerage service areas, and in nearly 300 town sanitary districts spread all across Wisconsin. As communities grow, these wetland permit exemptions areas will grow. These provisions will result in a net loss of untold amounts of wetlands across Wisconsin’s urban and rural settings, undermining community-based efforts to address flooding and poor water quality challenges. This bill passed and is on its way to the Governor’s office for his signature.

The Foxconn incentive package signed into state law late last year removes Wisconsin’s traditional authority to regulate isolated wetlands, meaning the company could destroy them if it agrees to create new wetlands at another location. In addition to the exemption from state regulations restricting filling of wetlands and diverting streams, Governor Walker and the Legislature exempted the company from compiling a comprehensive environmental impact statement, which is normally required for large developments as part of a process that allows the public to comment on plans.

The Foxconn deal is touted as a great boon for Wisconsin’s economy but is it worth it? Wetlands are crucial in preventing flooding, filtering impurities out of water before it reaches the aquifer and providing wildlife habitat.

**Wisconsin’s environmental tradition is being trampled.**

Please continue to let your legislators know you do not support the attack on our wetlands. And - most importantly, **VOTE** when election time rolls around.

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You have the ability to help shape the future of 1000 Friends and the future of Wisconsin.

A planned gift offers a way to combine philanthropy and financial planning and may give you an opportunity to give more than you thought possible. Please consider including 1000 Friends in your estate planning to help us expand the work of 1000 Friends for future generations. We urge you to talk to your financial advisor about the many options for making a planned gift or call Deb Nemeth at 608.259.1000.
Transportation Advocacy Around the State

ARRIVE TOGETHER
In December last year, our Arrive Together summit in Milwaukee with allies from the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation drew over 450 transit riders, elected officials and activists who came together to envision a clean, modern and efficient transportation system in Wisconsin.

TRANSPORTATION: THE FUTURE IS NOW
1kFriends hosted a state-wide conference on building healthy communities through responsible transportation decision-making. There were presentations ranging from using new technology in transportation to community organizing followed by interactive workshops.

Changing Technologies in Transportation
Dave Cieslewicz - Wisconsin Bike Fed

Organizing for Success Workshop
Led by Peter Skopec - WISPIRG
& Cassie Steiner - Sierra Club

MEETINGS ACROSS THE STATE
We met with local elected officials, planners, engineers and community activists in La Crosse, Eau Claire, Milwaukee, Port Washington, Waukesha and Appleton to help find ways to advocate for clean transportation projects that are cost effective, incremental and doable.
The Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter was introduced in December 2010 with five communities: Appleton, Bayfield, Fitchburg, Middleton and the Village of Weston. It has continued to grow and in 2017 alone, we added 6 bringing the total number of communities to 18.

An update to the program charter in 2016 allowing counties to join the program has increased the total number of participants to 22 with Bayfield, Eau Claire, La Crosse and St. Croix Counties joining.

Our mission is to help communities across the state of Wisconsin move continuously toward a sustainable future through initiatives that promote environmental stewardship, economic growth, public health, and social equity.

For more information visit greentiercommunities.org

LEGACY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH

Improving health and health equity through local government policymaking and programming

Another opportunity for GTLC was launched in 2017. Legacy Community Alliance for Health is a five-year project to build capacity within Green Tier Communities to improve health and health equity through the use of data and evidence-informed policies. The goal is to help communities achieve gains in at least one of four policy areas of interest: clean water, active transportation, safe and affordable housing, or healthy and accessible local food systems. Each participating community will choose their own policy approach.

Green Tier Partners
1000 Friends of Wisconsin
Wisconsin DNR
Center on Wisconsin Strategy
League of WI Municipalities
Municipal Environmental Group
WI Counties Association
WI Energy Conservation Corp.

Academic Partners
Applied Population Laboratory
Center on Wisconsin Strategy
Global Health Institute
Institute for Research on Poverty
Morgridge Center for Public Service
Nelson Institute
Population Health Institute
UW-Extension
Urban and Regional Planning
WI Center for Education Research
Climate Change - Acting Now

1000 Friends is on the front lines in the fight against climate change. The transportation sector is now the 2nd largest emitter of U.S. greenhouse gases, and our continued work to expand public transit and diversify our transportation system will help curb emissions.

We were appointed to the Dane County Council on Climate Change, a new initiative that aims to make Dane County the national leader on reducing carbon emissions at the local level. Ash is chairing the Transportation Working Group and has assembled a team of nine experts and decision-makers who will advise on the climate plan. Sam is a member of the Public Outreach Working Group which will help implement the plan once it is put into effect.

Annual temperatures in Wisconsin have risen by 1-2°F. By 2055, the state could warm anywhere from 4-9°F. For more information on locations across the country visit https://toolkit.climate.gov/climate-explorer2

Climate change is causing fewer and fewer cold days in Wisconsin. The average number of ice-covered days on Lake Mendota has decreased from 120 to less than 100 days in the last century. For more information on unique impacts across the U.S. visit https://nca2014.globalchange.gov

We were proud to serve on the Wisconsin Climate Table’s leadership team—a network of over 30 non-profits working to tackle climate change in the state. We encouraged the table to apply a racial and environmental justice lens across all their campaigns, and contracted with the Dane County YWCA for a year-long training on inclusivity and equality in the environmental movement.
What people are saying...

Founding Member

There are public interests that are best served by community action. In representative democracies, governments are the most powerful agencies for community action. But in today's America, our state and federal governments are failing us. Our best hope for stimulating action is to work through a myriad of non-government organizations such as 1000 Friends. With its focus on transportation, it addresses several of our most pressing challenges -- climate change, air pollution and poverty - all related to an increasing need for efficient transportation in both rural and congested areas.

Dan Cornwell
Member since 1996
Emeritus Professor - UW-Madison

Some common themes run through the work of 1000 Friends, whether we're promoting 21st century transportation options, protecting natural resources or helping to build healthy, sustainable communities and neighborhoods. We provide sensible, cost-effective and fact-based alternatives that help our state and local communities make wise and enduring decisions. Maybe that's why we've become a go-to source when policymakers face tough choices about how to build systems and infrastructure.

Board Member

1000 Friends of Wisconsin is one of Sierra Club’s most valuable coalition partners. They protect both people and the planet by supporting responsible land use policies. We know we can count on 1000 Friends for thorough and accurate research and consistent collaboration when advocating for better transportation policy in Wisconsin.

Bill Berry
Board Member
Writer

Partner

Cassie Steiner
PR & Outreach Associate
Sierra Club-John Muir Chapter