

1000 Friends Releases *Where Do We Go From Here?*

Second Transportation Briefing Book Hammers on the Need for Transportation Reform

Land use and transportation issues are a classic chicken-and-the-egg pairing. Does highway expansion lead to sprawling development or does sprawling development necessitate highway expansion? Do sidewalks, bike lanes, buses and trains create vibrant neighborhoods and downtowns or do vibrant neighborhoods and downtowns make sidewalks, bike lanes, buses and trains viable?

There is certainly room for debate as to whether the chicken or the egg came first when it comes to land use and transportation. But there is no question that both have dramatic impacts on our lives, our communities, our economy, and our environment.

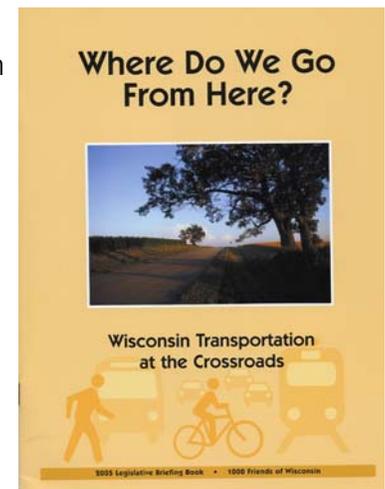
For too long in Wisconsin the costs and benefits of the transportation system we are investing in have not been adequately considered by policy makers and the public. There is little doubt that we are not maximizing our investments, that we are stranding too many of our citizens without real transportation choices, and that the negative land use impacts are immense.

Over the last few years, 1000 Friends has increased its focus on Wisconsin's transportation system to increase public awareness and elevate the debate of the transportation challenges and opportunities the state faces. As part of this effort, 1000 Friends has released our second transportation briefing booklet – *Where Do We Go From Here?*

Where Do We Go From Here? is intended to educate citizens, policy makers, business interests, transportation providers, and the media about two key themes. First, Wisconsin must "Fix-it-First" by prioritizing reinvestment by funding highway maintenance and repair before expanding highways, especially when recent studies show more than \$1 billion of overruns on such projects. Second, it must build a Balanced Transportation System by increasing investment in a diverse portfolio of transit and community transportation options to promote economic development across the state and insure mobility options for all Wisconsin residents.

Where Do We Go From Here? builds directly on the themes developed in our first transportation briefing booklet: *Exceeding the Limit*. In *Exceeding the Limit*, we highlighted the lack of transparency and accountability in the transportation budget process in Wisconsin. Our work on increasing transparency and accountability helped lead to the passage of Act 217 last April, which requires increased reporting on highway costs by the Department of Transportation and prohibits the Legislature from approving unaffordable pork-barrel highway projects.

To obtain a copy of *Where Do We Go From Here?* or *Exceeding the Limit*, please call Ward Lyles at 608.259.1000, Ext. 103 or email Ward@1kfriends.org.



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Please visit our new
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DIRECTOR'S COLUMN: STEVE HINIKER



We are making some organizational changes that will allow us to operate more efficiently and maximize our ability to accept tax deductible contributions. The changes discussed below were accepted at our February Board meeting and are effective immediately.

History

When 1000 Friends of Wisconsin was started in 1996, the founders created two organizations to combat poorly planned development in the state. 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Incorporated ("Inc."), was established to directly lobby the legislature and affect policies that relate to poorly planned development. (It was incorporated as a 501(c)(4) organization under the federal tax code.) The second organization, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin Land Use Institute ("The Land Use Institute"), was established to conduct research and education on land use policies. (It was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization under the federal tax code.)

Two organizations were needed at the time, primarily because federal tax laws prohibit organizations that conduct "substantial" lobbying efforts from accepting tax deductible contributions. Therefore, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Inc., was devoted entirely to lobbying and influencing policy, while the tax deductible research and educational efforts on land use were conducted through The Land Use Institute.

Why Change?

Having two organizations has its drawbacks. There are two boards of directors, two sets of tax reporting requirements, divided staff responsibilities and added administrative costs as a result.

We've been around for several years now and have a much better understanding of how much time and money we spend on lobbying. It is now clear that by taking advantage of a special provision of the federal tax codes—the 501(h) election—we can consolidate our operations into a single 501(c)(3) organization with no negative consequences and some added benefits. A single organization is able to continue to lobby at historical levels, as well as conduct research and education all as a 501(c)(3) organization that accepts tax deductible contributions.

What Happens Next?

Going forward, all of our operations will be conducted through our 501(c)(3) organization, the former "Land Use Institute", which has been renamed "1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Inc." Our future lobbying expenditures will be kept within the limits provided by the special tax provision that allows 501(c)(3)s to lobby. Both historically and currently, the lobbying expenditures of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Inc. have been well below the limits set by the IRS that allow us to take advantage of the special 501(h) election.

As a result of this change, we will have a single board of directors and a single set of books for all of our active operations. *Our services to our members and our outreach and lobbying work will not be affected by the change.*

What Happens to the Organization Formerly Known As Inc?

We will continue to have a 501(c)(4) organization called the "1000 Friends of Wisconsin Action Fund" (formerly known as "Inc."). Although this organization will be inactive, it will continue to exist and have its own board of directors in case we ever need to increase our lobbying expenditures significantly. At this time we do not plan to actively raise funds for the 501(c)(4) organization.

All contributions should now be made to *1000 Friends of Wisconsin, Inc.* and they are tax deductible.

Special Thanks for In-Kind Gifts

Flying Fish Graphics for work on the new transportation briefing book, *Where Do We Go From Here?*
 Dana Chabot, CPA, for assisting with financial statements and audit.
 Madelyn Leopold, Atty., for helping us achieve our reorganization.
 Bill Lane, Volunteer, who donated a digital camera to help make more effective presentations.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

THE 2005-2007 BIENNIAL BUDGET



The Governor's Budget in Brief

On February 8th Governor Doyle presented his second biennial budget to the legislature. The following is a synopsis of Governor Doyle's budget proposals on a number of our key legislative agenda items, as well as our proposed goals for action.

- **The Stewardship Fund**

The Governor maintained his commitment to the Stewardship Fund by preserving the current funding level of \$60 million per year for the program.

1000 Friends' Goal

The Warren Knowles-Gaylord Nelson Stewardship Fund was established by the State Legislature in 1989 to protect recreational lands, wildlife habitat, and other natural areas. More than 225,000 acres of the most ecologically important land in Wisconsin have been protected for future generations due to the Stewardship Fund. *1000 Friends will continue to urge lawmakers to maintain full funding of the Stewardship Fund.*

- **Comprehensive Planning Grants**

We're happy to report the Governor also maintained the \$2 million per year funding for the comprehensive planning grants program.

1000 Friends' Goal

The planning grants program has been enormously successful and highly competitive, awarding money for planning to those communities that demonstrate a solid public participation process and a focus on multi-jurisdictional cooperation. **It has been oversubscribed since its inception and promises to continue to draw many more applicants than it can support. In fact, during the most recent grant cycle a pool of local government applicants representing roughly a third of the state's population requested a total of \$5.5 million for planning activities.** At a time when local governments are being asked to tighten their belts and become more efficient, we need to make sure we maintain every incentive for them to do so. *1000 Friends will continue to urge lawmakers to support the planning grant program and increase its funding to meet demand.*

- **Ensuring Sustainable Forests for the Future**

The good news is that the Governor has included \$9.5 million in new funding during the biennium for forest management on state forests and other state lands. These resources will enable the Division of Forestry and its partners to advance several important initiatives to protect and sustainably manage Wisconsin's forest resources. The bad news is that the Governor's budget cuts one-third of the Division of Forestry's private forestry employees, making it difficult to do the work needed to protect Wisconsin forests from fragmentation and parcelization.

1000 Friends' Goal

Forested land covers 16 million acres, or nearly half the land area of Wisconsin and is an important part of the identity of the state. Our forests are treasured resources for biological diversity, recreation and the timber, paper, and pulp industries. They also enhance our air and water quality and provide wildlife habitat. Our ability to preserve the many benefits of our forests

depends on how we plan to prevent and manage the impacts of fragmentation caused by the increasing changes in land use and forest ownership. *1000 Friends will continue to work with our partners to advocate for policies and programs that support sustainable forestry and prevent forest fragmentation and parcelization in the state.*

- **Creating a Balanced Transportation System**

Governor Doyle has included an unprecedented increase of \$6 million to Elderly and Disabled Transportation Aids, a program that has been under funded for two decades. The Governor's budget proposal also includes modest increases to transit funding, highway maintenance and repair and a commuter rail study. It also partially restores the funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects that was cut by the legislature in the last budget. Despite a recent DOT report showing \$1.36 billion in wasteful cost overruns on highway expansion projects, large increases to Major Highway Projects (expansion projects) and the Marquette Interchanges are also included.

1000 Friends' Goal

Over the past year, 1000 Friends has worked with a coalition including AARP Wisconsin, the Coalition for Wisconsin Aging Groups, and the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Groups to increase funding for Elderly and Disabled Transportation by \$6 million. This increase is an important first step to providing access to jobs, medical services and community life for older adults and people with disabilities. We also continue to promote a Fix-it-First policy to fully fund all repair and maintenance needs before funding expansion projects, as well as a Balanced Transportation System policy to diversify our transportation portfolio by dramatically increasing funding for transit, local transportation, rail, and bicycle and pedestrian projects. *1000 Friends will continue to urge lawmakers to maintain and build on the positive steps forward the Governor has made, as well as encourage greater fiscal responsibility in highway funding.*

What's Next?

The Joint Finance Committee of the legislature has scheduled public hearings on the budget around the state from March 9-March 17. 1000 Friends will be following the Joint Finance Committee's action on the budget and will report to you as changes are made that affect the land use issues you care about. *It's possible that the Joint Finance Committee will make changes to the funding of the programs mentioned above, so they need to hear from you now about why these programs are important to you and how they affect you as a citizen.*

What you can do now:

1. Please call, write or email your legislators—*particularly those who sit on the Joint Finance Committee*—to express your strong support for the programs outlined above. You can locate your legislator at: www.legis.state.wi.us.
2. Please call or write the Governor's office at 608-266-1212 or "Office of the Governor, 115 East State Capitol, Madison, WI 53702" to thank him for supporting the comprehensive planning grants program and Stewardship Fund and to encourage his continued support of the programs that 1000 Friends of Wisconsin values. *Thank you!*

CONSERVATION BRIEFING BOOK

1K FRIENDS JOINED 60 STATE CONSERVATION GROUPS IN PRESENTING LCV BRIEFING BOOK OUTLINING STATE CONSERVATION POLICY PRIORITIES TO STATE LEGISLATORS AT CONSERVATION LOBBY DAY.

SEE THE BRIEFING BOOK AT LCV'S WEBSITE AT WWW.CONSERVATIONVOTERS.ORG

PLEASE CONTACT
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WISCONSIN LANDSCAPES



1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN

GOVERNOR PRIORITIZES ELDERLY AND DISABLED TRANSPORTATION PROPOSES A \$6 MILLION INCREASE IN 2005-2007 BUDGET

In our last newsletter, we wrote about our work to increase the transportation choices of Wisconsin's most vulnerable citizens, who are all too often stranded without options. We are pleased to bring you the following update.

As part of his 2005-2007 Budget, Governor Doyle has included an urgently needed \$6 million increase to Elderly and Disabled Transportation. The Governor's request is being applauded as a major step forward in meeting the needs of many of our most vulnerable citizens.

Across the state, especially in rural and suburban areas, older adults and people with disabilities have few choices for getting around their communities. Limited transportation options mean limited access to jobs, medical services, shopping, houses of worship, and all aspects of life beyond their own front door.

For more than a year, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin has been working with a broad coalition, including AARP Wisconsin, the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, the Wisconsin Jewish Conference, and the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Groups, to enhance Elderly and Disabled Transportation services, which are a very important corollary to transit systems in general.

We asked the administration for a \$6 million increase in the 2005-2007 State Budget to Elderly and Disabled Transportation Aids. Clearly, the Governor heard our message and the message of countless older adults and people with disabilities. His proposed increase is a clear indication that Wisconsin must address the huge unmet need for transportation choices and a more balanced transportation system immediately.

Ward Lyles, Transportation Policy Director