



1000 Friends of Wisconsin

2021 Annual Report

Since 1996, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin has been advancing healthy communities, positive economic outcomes and environmental benefits across Wisconsin.

We do things differently. We are focused on making the connection between good community design and protection of the natural environment. We know that when we make substantial improvements to our communities, we have a bigger impact on the world we live in. Everything that we do on the land touches something else. We address policies in communities that are too frequently underestimated in their importance to protecting the natural environment. We have never strayed from our objective to curb sprawl through better use of our lands, but we have taken steps that many others tend to overlook – achieving benefits that go far beyond any one community’s borders.

Our natural landscape has been transformed by our highways. Hills flattened, farms removed, and wetlands drained are direct results of the highway construction that has extended the reach of the modern commute. Consequently, new housing developments and shopping malls have been created atop former farm fields dismantling many existing communities.

1000 Friends is working to rebuild communities. By focusing on the relationship between community design and transportation, we can help build better places to live. With an emphasis on developing transit connections, we can also help residents save money by reducing their dependence on cars and gasoline. A walkable/bikeable neighborhood supports local retail and improves the quality of life. It also means reduced emissions from cars that increase air pollution and contribute to climate change.

1000 Friends is working to mitigate climate change. When discussing climate change mitigation strategies, the focus tends to be on energy – i.e., switching to renewables. A critical area that is often overlooked in combating climate change is urban and regional land use planning. How communities are designed and how people move around them has both short and long-term consequences for mitigating and adapting to climate change. We are at the forefront of fighting for an equitable carbon-neutral transportation future. In all of our work, 1000 Friends is committed to working toward a future of environmental, climate and social justice for all. Through collaborative programs we are expanding partnerships with community-based and statewide organizations that share this commitment. Our work promoting sound land use, climate and transportation policy cannot be successful without an equitable foundation.

2021 Highlights

Transportation

1000 Friends worked intensively throughout 2021 to help reduce transportation emissions while building cleaner, more reliable, and inclusive transportation networks. We started the year by promoting our Blueprint 2050 report, which became required reading for a UW-Lacrosse sustainable transportation class. We also started work against I-94, including speaking on webinars, meeting with elected officials and writing letters to federal officials. We were able to the project delayed for a year as further environmental review was held by WisDOT.

We released Fix at Six, an alternative vision to expanding I-94 in Milwaukee that included more walking, biking, and transit options. The press release for our report was widely reported and well received. Fix at Six remains a popular option for grassroots supporters opposed to expansion in Milwaukee. We plan to use this report to further educate policy makers.

Our organization continues to lead coalitions including at the Wisconsin Climate Table, REAMP, and the Coalition for More Responsible Transportation (CMRT). We also established relationships with Drive Electric Wisconsin to help promote EV adoption across Wisconsin. These partnerships helped us make strategic plans helped us for a more sustainable and equitable transportation budget.

Through our partnerships we were able to drive folks to the version listening sessions and budget hearings to promote sustainable transportation policy recommendations. We continue to push for RTA-enabling legislation, restore complete streets legislation, and to guide additional funding to active and public transportation in Wisconsin.

1000 Friends also took over two active transportation networks in 2021. The two networks were combined to create one, grassroots, active living network for Wisconsin. The new program, Active Wisconsin, is an advocacy, resource sharing, collaborative, and recognition network for communities that are making it easier for their residents to walk, bike, and be active. The network also addresses last mile and transit connections to active transportation and connects closely to our other transportation efforts. We have developed a new website and have started to expand the reach of the network.

Green Tier Legacy Communities (GTLC)

We helped create the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter program over 10 years ago to assist communities in developing and implementing sustainability measures leading to an improvement in the economy, environment, and quality of life in the charter communities.

When communities sign the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter, they agree to take actions and share information to move continuously toward a sustainable future through initiatives that promote environmental stewardship, economic growth, public health, and social equity. There are 28 Green Tier Legacy Communities and counties across the state and the number keeps growing!

The communities and counties continue to make 100 percent renewable energy commitments! These communities are leading examples in the state of Wisconsin for combating climate change at the local level.

We continued our involvement in the Health in All Policy component of the GTLC Charter. Through the project, the Legacy Communities Alliance for Health (LCAH), we aim to improve health and health equity through local government policymaking and programming. The goal is to help communities achieve gains in at least one of four policy areas of interest: clean water, transportation, safe and affordable housing, and healthy and affordable local food systems.

Green Schoolyards

We led a community project at Aldo Leopold Elementary School - the largest elementary school in the Madison Metropolitan School District and one of four Community Schools – using green infrastructure to address flooding issues and helping the school develop spaces for outdoor environmental education and creative play. We coordinated a Green Schoolyard Committee made up of parents, staff, and community partners with the focus of using community input to utilize the vast green space around the school to create a safe space for learning, exploring, and gathering.

Before the pandemic closed schools in March 2020, our committee had introduced environmental education projects to Leopold School. We helped classroom teachers' partner with a UW Arboretum educator and Abe Lenocho led 4 sessions of an environmental after school club (The Green Squad).

In July 2021, after our 22nd committee meeting, we left the project in the capable hands of Leopold parents, staff, and community members to take it where they want to go. The team will be working on a comprehensive plan for the schoolyard to share with the incoming principal at Leopold this year.

Urban Forestry

Starting in 2018, 1000 Friends administered a US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) grant with four Wisconsin communities, the Green Tier Legacy Community (GTL) program, and Wisconsin DNR's Urban Forestry program. Our project helped protect water quality in the Great Lakes Basin by planting 350 trees across four GTLC communities in Wisconsin - Ashland, Bayside, Oshkosh and Sheboygan. We finished the project this fall and ended up with 371 new trees planted!

While we were finishing the GLRI grant, Abe Lenocho, our Community Project Director, was applying to other urban forestry grant opportunities and connecting with urban forestry experts around the state. Abe's work was eventually noticed statewide, as he was chosen to serve as a member of the Wisconsin Urban Forestry Council.

At the end of 2020, 1000 Friends also received word that we have been awarded a 2021 DNR Regular Urban Forestry grant for a yearlong webinar series on urban forestry. The urban forestry webinars were geared towards Wisconsin homeowners and the general public. Each webinar strives to educate and inspire Wisconsinites about the trees in their community and in their yards through storytelling.

We are excited to promote forestry as a means to improve air quality by absorbing pollutants such as ozone, nitrogen dioxide, ammonia, and particulate matter as well as performing carbon sequestration. Urban forestry is also important for stormwater management.

2020 Income and Expenses

Revenues and Support without Donor Restrictions	2020
Contributions and Grants	116,420
Government Grant	37,500
Fees for Services	12,500
Interest Income	70
Other	3,060
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>90,754</u>
Total Revenues and Support without Donor Restrictions	260,304
Expenses	
Program Expenses:	
Transportation	108,652
Sustainability	35,388
Water Quality	<u>35,410</u>
Total Program Expenses	179,450
Supporting Services:	
Management and General	41,739
Fundraising	<u>31,338</u>
Total Supporting Services	72,717
Total Expenses	252,167
Change in Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	<u>8,137</u>
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	
Contributions and Grants	111,484
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>(90,754)</u>
Change in Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	<u>20,730</u>
Total Change in Net Assets	28,867
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	<u>150,029</u>
Net Assets at End of Year	<u>178,896</u>

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This Annual Report is available to the public at:
<https://www.1kfriends.org/annual-reports>