



2023 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 means healthier communities with 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.

2023 Highlights

Transportation

1000 Friends had a breakthrough year in 2023 with a number of new and ongoing projects. We continued advocating to shift investment from Milwaukee's freeway system to its transit system through our **Rethink 794** campaign and ongoing opposition of I-94 expansion. Rethink 794 continued to garner frequent media coverage and generate considerable public comment in support of an at-grade boulevard alternative for I-794. The City of Milwaukee supports our efforts by publicly endorsing the at-grade alternative and by including it within its Downtown Plan Update recommendations. By driving engagement in WisDOT's Lake Interchange Study, we ensured the at-grade alternative remained within consideration. We continued our **work against I-94 expansion** and are pleased to announce that FHWA has agreed to investigate a Title VI compliant. While WisDOT has expressed a preference for an expansion, our advocacy has improved the overall project. The Stadium Freeway (Wis-175) boulevard study, a smaller Stadium Interchange design, and a study for 27th Street bus rapid transit are all advancing forward.

1000 Friends continued our **outreach** by speaking at conferences, including the Climate Justice and Community Resilience Summit, the American Planning Association conference, and Urban Spaceship 2023. We were invited to join America Walks inaugural Freeway Fighters Summit in Cincinnati to connect with advocates across the US. Working with UWM Urban Planning Chair Dr. Robert Schneider and his Master of Urban Planning students, we began research into transit access improvements along Wis-145 in Milwaukee. 1000 Friends of Wisconsin will continue to be a leader in advocating for sustainable transportation in 2024.

Webinar Series

We hosted 5 webinars in the first part of 2023. Topics included Safe Routes to Schools and Parks, Climate Change and Transportation, Centering Equity in Local Climate Action Planning, the Community Transportation Academy, and No Mow May. These are all available on our website and YouTube channel. We are planning to revive the webinar series in 2024.

Green Tier Legacy Communities (GTLC)

We helped create the Green Tier Legacy Communities Charter program 15 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.

There are more than 30 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 Wisconsin for combating climate change locally. 1000 Friends was a member of the Program Improvement Working Group in a year-long effort to revise the Green Tier reporting methods to include metrics and a more updated approach to renewable energy commitments.

We continue to partner with communities in new and innovative ways.

Active Wisconsin started in 2012 as the Wisconsin Active Communities Alliance (WACA). At that time, local coalition members from around the state decided they needed a statewide active community

effort, something that was missing from state government and agencies. WACA's collaborative and grassroots spirit remains an important part of Active Wisconsin today.

The [Wisconsin Active Together \(WAT\)](#) network was formed in 2017 in response to a major revision of the statewide Complete Streets law and repeal of eminent domain for bike and pedestrian infrastructure. WAT was created to build a grassroots response to these statewide setbacks, by recognizing communities for their efforts to make active living safer and more accessible for community members.

In 2020, the WACA and WAT networks merged under the leadership of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin to form Active Wisconsin. Our **Active Wisconsin** network of over 50 communities and counties continues to thrive. We host quarterly calls featuring guest speakers and offering the opportunity for members to share successes and challenges. Our monthly e-news highlights the 1k Friends webinar series, community highlights, and educational and funding opportunities.

In early October, we hosted a special all-day event called *Moving Communities Forward on Active Transportation*. Members of the Active Wisconsin network met in downtown Appleton at the Warch Campus Center on the beautiful Lawrence University campus. The event was inspiring and full of presentations and lively discussions about connecting with elected leaders, grassroots advocacy, livability, the challenges of small city transit, and new perspectives on community education and public engagement. A highlight of the day was hearing from Wisconsin Assembly Representatives Kristina Shelton and Lee Snodgrass.

We launched a new program, the **Community Transportation Academy**! The Academy is a free course for anyone who wants to learn more about local transportation planning so they can be a more effective advocate at the local level. Over ten weeks, participants learn about local planning processes, explore safe street design, hear from guest experts, tour local infrastructure, and develop real problem-solving strategies for addressing local transportation issues. The inaugural Academy took place in La Crosse early in the year, followed by a second Academy in Stevens Point in the fall. Both programs were successful, each with over two dozen participants ranging in age from 20-70 and representing a diverse cross-section of professional backgrounds, abilities, and personal interests. The Academy will continue in Beloit and Kenosha in 2024.

We are part of the **Wisconsin Climate Table**, a network of more than 30 organizations across the state with the common goal of equitably eliminating greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin by 2050. Under the leadership of our Community Programs Director, in 2023 the Climate Table established a website, released an online tool kit for equity in local climate action planning, launched a campaign to work with the WI Office of Sustainable and Clean Energy to support the Clean Energy Plan, and continued to work with a Project Coordinator on relieving energy burden and climate impacts in historically underserved communities in Milwaukee. The work in 2024 is focused on connecting communities with state and federal resources for clean energy and expanding the Equity Tool Kit to include stories of impact and resources for advocates.

New publications we helped create are available on our website 1kfriends.org under Resources:

- **FLEX Your Grants: Leveraging Federal Dollars for Clean Transportation Projects.** We are currently working on a companion toolkit.
- **Transportation Planning for People and the Climate.**

2022 Income and Expenses

Revenues and Support without Donor Restrictions	2022	2021
Contributions and Grants	38,811	149,908
Government Grant - Paycheck Protection Loan	-	41,367
Fees for Services	47,902	11,250
Interest Income	92	34
Other	1,889	1,217
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>138,694</u>	<u>43,384</u>
Total Revenues and Support without Donor Restrictions	227,388	247,160
Expenses		
Program Expenses:		
Transportation	75,374	99,306
Sustainability	59,385	43,750
Water Quality	-	<u>31,895</u>
Land Use	<u>38,826</u>	-
Total Program Expenses	173,585	174,951
Supporting Services:		
Management and General	45,761	39,787
Fundraising	<u>23,679</u>	<u>17,776</u>
Total Supporting Services	69,440	57,563
Total Expenses	243,025	232,514
Change in Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	(15,637)	14,646
Net Assets with Donor Restrictions		
Contributions and Grants	155,308	17,354
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>(138,694)</u>	<u>(43,384)</u>
Change in Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	16,614	(26,030)
Total Change in Net Assets	977	(11,384)
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	<u>167,512</u>	<u>178,896</u>
Net Assets at End of Year	<u>168,489</u>	<u>167,512</u>

1000 Friends of Wisconsin

820 W. Wingra Drive

Box #259704

Madison, WI 53725

Executive Director: Deb Nemeth

This Annual Report is available to the public at:

1kfriends.org/annual-reports-financials