



## 2024 Annual Report

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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.

## 2024 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. This year the Rethink 794 coalition released new architectural renderings by John Everitt including an augmented reality experience of a new neighborhood in place of 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. We also joined a federal civil rights lawsuit led by Midwest Environmental Advocates and Dennis Grzezinski to oppose the expansion of I-94. Our advocacy has improved the overall project. The Stadium Freeway (Wis-175) boulevard study, and a smaller Stadium Interchange design are advancing forward.

1000 Friends continued our **outreach** by speaking at conferences, including the Wisconsin Forward Together Summit, the American Planning Association conference, Climate Fast Forward, and the REAMP Accessible Transportation Summit. We contributed research to a multi-state review of DOTs Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessments with partners across the Midwest. 1000 Friends of Wisconsin will continue to be a leader in advocating for sustainable transportation in 2025.

### Webinar Series

We hosted 4 webinars in the first part of 2023. Topics included The Future of Passenger Rail in Wisconsin, Exclusionary Zoning, Parking Reform, and Transportation Safety. These are all available on our website and YouTube channel. We are currently planning to expand our webinar series in 2025.

### **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 features, and educational and funding opportunities. The **Community Transportation Academy is expanding across Wisconsin and the Midwest!** 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. Now in year 2, the Academy took place in Beloit early in the year, followed by Kenosha in the fall. We are planning Academies for West Allis and Greater Green Bay in 2025. Thanks to support from the GM Climate and Equity Fund, we led training workshops for 5 organizations to lead their own Academies in Cleveland, Des Moines, Detroit, Kansas City, and Minneapolis. The Midwest Academy program will continue in 2025 and include the cities of Duluth, MN and Grand Rapids, MI.

We hosted events in La Crosse and Stevens Point that showcased new bike and pedestrian infrastructure and brought people together to talk about street safety and climate action. “Making Connections in La Crosse” kicked off with a bike ride with the mayor event and an afternoon reception with local speakers from the City of La Crosse and La Crosse county sharing about exciting local initiatives to address housing and transportation equity. “Climate, Connections, and Community in Stevens Point” featured a crosswalk art installation, lunch and climate conversation at the Schmeckle Reserve, and a walk audit and afternoon social hour at UWSP. Both events also culminated with a free screening of *The Street Project* followed by open Q&A with local panelists.

We have been working with the Department of Health Services as part of a multi-year grant from the CDC to support physical activity in several communities. We worked with Walnut Way in Milwaukee to host a screening of *The Street Project* and plan walk and bike audits of Fond du Lac Ave and North Ave with Red, Bike and Green. In 2025, we will be planning a summit on the impacts of transportation on climate and health.

We coordinate the **Wisconsin Climate Table**, a network of nearly 40 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 2024 the Climate Table released a StoryMap of Energy Burden and Climate Change Impacts to accompany the online tool kit for equity in local climate action planning, participated in the Climate Action Navigators network led by the WI Office of Sustainable and Clean Energy, and continued to work with a Project Coordinator on relieving energy burden and climate impacts in historically underserved communities in Milwaukee. The work in 2025 is focused on pushing the state to be a leader in climate resilience and carbon reduction as the OSCE develops Wisconsin’s first Comprehensive Climate Action Plan.

This year we started a new effort to support the City of Milwaukee’s citywide policy plan and zoning code updates to increase housing affordability and choice. We are working with Narvarte Development to build grassroots support for increasing housing options in Milwaukee. We hosted Zoned Out: Zoning and its Impact on Housing forum with Kirk E. Harris presenting the history of zoning and its link to racial segregation.

## 2023 Income and Expenses

<b>Revenues and Support without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Contributions and Grants	38,811	181,943
Fees for Services	47,902	35,500
Interest Income	92	206
Other	1,889	2,384
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>155,308</u>	
<b>Total Revenues and Support without Donor Restrictions</b>	227,388	220,033
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program Expenses:		
Transportation	75,374	
Sustainability	59,385	
Land Use	<u>38,826</u>	
Total Program Expenses	173,585	182,080
Supporting Services:		
Management and General	45,761	43,685
Fundraising	<u>23,679</u>	25,647
Total Supporting Services	69,440	69,332
<b>Total Expenses</b>	243,025	251,412
Change in Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	(15,637)	
<b>Net Assets with Donor Restrictions</b>		
Contributions and Grants	155,308	181,943
Net assets released from restrictions	<u>(138,694)</u>	
Change in Net Assets with Donor Restrictions	16,614	
Total Change in Net Assets	977	-31,379
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	<u>167,512</u>	168,489
<b>Net Assets at End of Year</b>	<u>168,489</u>	137,110

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This Annual Report is available to the public at:  
[1kfriends.org/annual-reports-financials](http://1kfriends.org/annual-reports-financials)