

# Commuter Service Feasibility Study for Northeast Wisconsin

## **Task 3: Statement of Needs, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria**

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**East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission**



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# Statement of Needs, Goals, and Evaluation Criteria

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## Purpose

### Purpose Statement

Commuter Service in the I-41 Corridor will strengthen connections between communities, enhance access to jobs, education, and the arts, and create opportunities for regional economic development.

## Needs

### Definition

**Needs:** Existing transportation priorities in the corridor that the new commuter service is intended to address.

### Need Statement

The I-41 Corridor, including Brown, Outagamie, Winnebago, and Fond du Lac counties, is a diverse, interconnected region and a significant population and employment center in Wisconsin. Anchored by the core cities of Green Bay, Appleton, Oshkosh, and Fond du Lac, the I-41 Corridor experiences a high degree of intercity travel and economic activity, as well as increasing regional cooperation.

Within the study area, the Appleton and Oshkosh urbanized areas (Outagamie and Winnebago counties) are home to the greatest number of cross-county commuters, as well as the highest proportion of workers commuting from other I-41 communities. Oshkosh's GO Transit and Appleton's Valley Transit have mobilized to meet these travel needs by jointly implementing GO Transit's Route 10, as well as separate demand-response and job access programs to assist transit riders in reaching employment locations that are outside the fixed-route transit network.

These programs demonstrate that regional cooperation can improve transportation connections, but local agencies, residents, and economic development organizations recognize that more effort is needed. Additional planning, coordination, and funding could allow the communities across the I-41 Corridor to implement new or additional transportation options that facilitate even stronger regional connections.

As a more connected, integrated region, the I-41 Corridor could improve the quality of life for existing residents, help businesses continue to attract and retain employees, and pave the way for future economic development opportunities. The proposed commuter service will leverage the region's considerable assets to improve intercity travel options.

## Goals

### Definition

**Goals:** Desired outcomes for I-41 Corridor communities. Goals should be measurable, as they will inform the criteria used to evaluate service alternatives.

### Goal Statements

#### **Goal 1: Regional Accessibility**

Communities depend on public transportation for access to jobs, education, healthcare, and the arts. Commuter service in the I-41 Corridor will connect people to the types of destinations they value, including the region's highest-density employment and activity centers.

#### **Goal 2: Convenience/Efficiency**

When planning trips, public transit customers value the convenience and efficiency with which they can reach destinations. Effective commuter transit will deliver service that is fast, direct, and competitive with car travel times. On a corridor-wide basis, transit service can also improve safety and reliability of major roadways, including I-41.

#### **Goal 3: Affordability**

In many areas, transit users represent lower-income segments of the population, who often have limited access to personal cars. To attract these users (as well as customers who can afford other transportation options), I-41 commuter service will be priced affordably.

#### **Goal 4: Partnerships**

Specialized transit services can be especially successful when public transit agencies engage communities, customers, and employers in planning and implementing service. Depending on the service model selected, local governments or private employers could play a leading role in service design, marketing and promotional activities, or assembling a funding coalition.

#### **Goal 5: Funding Sustainability**

Multiyear funding allows transit agencies to plan, maintain, implement, and improve service with greater confidence and continuity in a changing economic climate. Future commuter service should include a sustainable and agreed-upon funding source, as well as an appropriate governance structure.

#### **Goal 6: Leverage Existing Resources**

Efficient and effective commuter transportation depends on connecting new services with existing destinations and local transit networks. Commuter service in the I-41 Corridor will build on existing multimodal transportation infrastructure, offering convenient connections to other modes.

#### **Goal 7: Facilitate Economic Development**

Public transit service can play a role in promoting economic development, including by enabling access to employment sites and assisting with employee recruitment and retention. To the extent possible, commuter service in the I-41 Corridor will facilitate access to priority development sites identified by local communities.

### Goal 8: Service Coordination

The commuter service framework should include provisions for promoting supportive infrastructure and policy initiatives at all levels of government; seeking integration of fare systems and other transit technology; and creating a stakeholder committee or other governance structure to implement and oversee new commuter programs. A long-term communications strategy should be created and should include the use of common language to communicate transit concepts.

## Evaluation Criteria

### Definition

Evaluation criteria will be used to assess the extent to which various service alternatives address the project’s goals. These evaluation criteria can also be used to measure the performance of a future commuter service program once it is implemented.

### Proposed Evaluation Criteria

**Table 1. Goals, Evaluation Criteria, and Measurement Standards**

Goal	Evaluation Criteria	Measurement Standard
1. Regional Accessibility	Access to Jobs	Percentage of regional jobs located within 0.25 miles of fixed-route and/or demand-response transit
	Access to Transit	Percentage of regional residents living within 0.25 miles of fixed-route and/or demand-response transit
	Access to Healthcare and Education	Quality of service to regional healthcare facilities; Quality of service to higher education facilities
2. Convenience / Efficiency	Transit Travel Time	Transit travel time as a percentage of personal auto travel time (where transit is available)
	Safety & Congestion	Potential to improve I-41 safety and travel time reliability
3. Affordability	Fare Comparison	Proposed transit fare compared to existing travel options, including personal auto use
4. Partnerships	Public-Private Coordination	Ongoing engagement of employers to identify and meet transportation needs; Use of private/volunteer transportation providers as needed
5. Funding Sustainability	Multi-year Funding	Estimated state and/or federal share of total project cost; Multiyear commitment of local share
6. Leveraging Existing Resources	Connections to Existing Transportation Services/Modes	Number of local transit routes served; Presence of local bicycle infrastructure (Yes/No); Use of existing park-and-ride and/or transit facilities
7. Facilitating Future Development	Connections to Priority Development Sites	Number of developable parcels within 0.25 miles of proposed commuter service
8. Service Coordination	Supportive Policies; Governance; Communication	Ongoing promotion of supportive infrastructure/programs; Governance structure appropriate for service provided; Well-defined communication plan