

**MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
TRANSIT WORK GROUP
AGENDA**

**MAY 30th, 2024
1:30 P.M.**

**LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM
210 RIVER DR., WAUSAU, WI**

Members: Randy Fifrick, Joan Joss, Mark Thuot, Gaylene Rhoden, George Peterson, Becky McElhaney, Arran Hersey, Megan Newman, Doug Diny, Dave Eckman, Jami Gebert, Michael Wodalski

Mission/Purpose: The Transit Planning Work Group (TPWG) are representatives of the communities in the Wausau Metropolitan Area that have the authority and knowledge to discuss the Public Transit System and related components in their community. Through discussion, common issues and concerns will be evaluated and recommendations for goals, objectives, and guidelines for each community will be developed for providing Public Transit in their community and the metro area.

Persons wishing to attend the meeting by phone may call into the telephone conference beginning **five (5) minutes prior to the start time indicated above using the following number:**

**PHONE NUMBER: 1-408-418-9388
ACCESS CODE: 2490 716 6556**

**Please Note: If you are prompted to provide an "Attendee Identification Number" enter the # sign.
No other number is required to participate in the telephone conference.**

When you enter the telephone conference, PLEASE PUT YOUR PHONE ON MUTE!

AGENDA ITEMS:

- 1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS**
- 2. DISCUSSION REGARDING BASIS FOR CREATING THE TRANSIT WORK GROUP**
- 3. REVIEW DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES IDENTIFIED IN THE CHARTER**
- 4. INTRODUCTION OF THE METRO AREA TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP) AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 5. DISCUSSION OF EACH MUNICIPALITY'S STANCE REGARDING TRANSIT IN THEIR COMMUNITY**
- 6. DISCUSSION TOPICS & AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**
- 7. IDENTIFY NEXT MEETING DATE & TIME**
- 8. ADJOURN**

Any person planning to attend this meeting who needs some type of special accommodation in order to participate should call the County Clerk's Office at 715-261-1500 one business day before the meeting.


SIGNED _____
PRESIDING OFFICER OR DESIGNEE

EMAILED TO: Courthouse, Daily Herald, TPP Printing, City Pages
Midwest Radio Group, Marshfield News

NOTICE POSTED AT COURTHOUSE:
By: _____

EMAILED BY: AA
DATE: 5/21/24
EMAIL TIME: 11:00 am

**WAUSAU METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT PLANNING WORK GROUP
TO
CREATE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXPANDING TRANSIT SERVICE IN THE METRO AREA**

Reporting Relationships: Reports to the Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Commission and the participating Communities also the Wausau Transit Commission.

Mission/Purpose: The Transit Planning Work Group (TPWG) are representatives of the communities in the Wausau Metropolitan Area that have the authority and knowledge to discuss the Public Transit System and related components in their community. Through discussion, common issues and concerns will be evaluated and recommendations for goals, objectives, and guidelines for each community will be developed for providing Public Transit in their community and the metro area.

Membership: The TPWG will nominate a chairperson for the group. Membership will include representatives identified by the community from the following:

1. Marathon County
2. City of Wausau
3. City of Schofield
4. Village of Weston
5. Village of Rothschild
6. Village of Rib Mountain
7. Greater Wausau Chamber of Commerce
8. Wausau Area Transit System, aka, Metro Ride

Member Terms: TPWG will be sunset on March 31, 2025.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. Facilitate and manage communications with municipalities, public and private transit providers, and the business community.
2. Serve as a liaison with their respective community leadership.
3. Develop recommendations that provides specific:
 - Community goals and objectives for obtaining and providing public transit for the area including:
 - Addressing current constraints to service expansion
 - Transit Development Plans
 - Short and long-term system upgrades
 - Potential areas for collaboration
 - Workforce development
 - Policy guidelines
 - Administrative guidelines
 - Public engagement strategies for each community and the Metro area as a whole.
4. Determine consistency of policy recommendations with existing communities strategic and comprehensive plans.
5. Evaluate the fiscal impacts of proposed policy recommendations.

Description of timeline:

1. Begin meeting by May 2024.
2. Review existing issues regarding each community's public transit service. (July 2024)
3. Create community goals and objectives (September 2024)
4. Formulate recommendations relating to policy and administrative guidelines (November 2024)
5. Present goal, objectives, and guidelines to represented communities (Feb 2025)
6. Close-out report to Metropolitan Planning Commission and Communities (Mar 2025)

MPO's Transit Work Group
Membership by Community

Marathon County – Randy Fifrick, Supervisor and MPO Chairman

C. Schofield - Joan Joss, City Council

Mark Thuot, Public Works Director

V. Rib Mountain - Gaylene Rhoden, Administrator

V. Rothschild - George Peterson, President

C. Wausau - Becky McElhaney, Council President & Transit Commission Chair

Arran Hersey, Metro Ride Director

Megan Newman, Deputy Transit Director

Doug Diny, Mayor

Wausau Chamber - Dave Eckman, Director

V. Weston - Jami Gebert, Administrator

Michael Wodalski, Public Works Director

MARATHON COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING COMMISSION
Transit Work Group
Member Orientation Materials 2024

1. 2022 Transit Development Plan (TDP) 5-year plan for transit in the
MPO area - [TDP](#)

at milestones throughout the planning period and included:

- Rider and public surveys
- Public meetings
- Interviews with local officials from Wausau, Weston, Rib Mountain, Schofield, and Rothschild; agency representatives; employers; and other stakeholders
- Meeting with local employers and agencies
- Focus groups
- Regular engagement with the Project Oversight Committee

Conclusions

Transit service and technology recommendations are presented in three scenarios. Recommendations within each scenario can be implemented in combination or as stand-alone improvements. Different scenarios are necessary because expansion of service beyond the Wausau city limits was identified as a top priority but such an expansion can be implemented only through new, formal, funding agreements between Wausau and the neighboring communities. Since no inter-governmental agreements were reached during the planning process, all recommendations for expanding the service area are presented separate from Wausau-based recommendations (Scenario 2). Metro Ride and the local communities will continue to negotiate and consider the potential for inter-governmental agreements.

Scenario 1 focuses on recommendations that can be accomplished within the city. These recommendations will require additional funding from local, State and Federal sources.

Scenario 3 offers recommendations that reduce the number of fixed routes and the frequency of service and reallocate the cost savings to implementing some of the top priority service improvements such as longer hours or days of service.

All recommendations are based on quantitative data analysis and qualitative community engagement input. Scenarios are designed for implementation over a five-year horizon; however, a change in executive leadership at Metro Ride is predicted for

2023 and may delay progress in the short term.. Three scenarios are summarized as follows:

Scenario 1: Improve and Expand Metro Ride Services within Wausau

Scenario 1 focuses on options to improve transit technology at Metro Ride including farebox and fare media, Route/Stop Annunciators, Real Time Bus Location data feeds for rider use, and Automated Passenger Counters (APCs). The scenario also considers new fare structure options. Finally, Scenario 1 explores possible service expansions within Wausau City Limits including on-demand microtransit zones; expanding operating hours to meet the needs of employers, employees, and other purposes; and adding Saturday service.

Scenario 2: Expand Public Transit Service into Rib Mountain, Rothschild, Weston, and Schofield

Scenario 2 focuses on service area expansions into the nearby communities most desired by riders and general public members who participated in the study. The expansions are designed to serve important shopping and employment locations, many of which are located outside of Wausau. The new VA Veterans Clinic and the Department of Motor Vehicles sites are nearby, but outside Wausau city limits. Some medical facilities; price-conscious shopping including Walmart, Sams Club and Aldi; and major employers including Greenheck and Crystal Finishing are situated outside of Wausau. None of these are accessible by public transit. Service area expansions will require additional revenue provided through inter-governmental funding agreements between Wausau and the communities served by the extensions. Contractual agreements with private industry or human service agencies may also be used to help supplement the expansions.

Scenario 3: Service Reductions

Scenario 3 focuses on options that reduce the total number of fixed routes and associated operating expenses. Cost savings would be reallocated to

Scenario 2: Public Transit Service into Rib Mountain, Rothschild, and Weston/Schofield

The following alternatives present options to expand the Metro Ride service area beyond Wausau city limits to Rib Mountain, Rothschild, Schofield, and Weston. An expansion would address the top priority indicated by riders and the general public. Expanding service would also require additional funding.

A. Route G: Connection to Rib Mountain

A new Rib Mountain route connecting with Route G at The Crossroads Country Market would serve the primary existing service area of Metro Ride's Route G and Rib Mountain. The route is described below and depicted in Figure 30. The Rib Mountain route would meet Route G near the Crossroads Country Market where passengers could transfer.

With the demolition of the Wausau Center Mall in May/June of 2021, Wausau residents were left with minimal in-person shopping areas within the city limits. However Rib Mountain has Old Navy, Hobby Lobby, Old Navy, TJ Maxx, Best Buy, Sam's Club, and Walmart Supercenter to name a few shopping opportunities. Rib Mountain also has many restaurants as well as the DMV Service Center for Marathon County. Although on-line shopping has increased dramatically over the past few years, many people still enjoy in-person shopping. This route alternative would expand shopping options for Metro Ride riders, including access to the area's most affordable options for groceries and retail.

The passenger survey completed between October 18–21, 2021 identified that the highest rated desire was for service to be expanded outside Wausau into neighboring communities, particularly Rib Mountain. To the questions "How often would you like to travel outside of Wausau but do not have a ride," 20 respondents said weekly, 23 indicated 2–3 times

a week, while 16 said daily. In total, 49 percent of respondents desire regular service outside Wausau for their needs. Moreover, the 2018 Transportation Development Plan (TDP) indicated in a passenger survey of 485 respondents that the number two service improvement desired was "service to other communities" (39%).

Funding Partnership Requirement with Neighboring Jurisdictions Receiving Transit Service

For this alternative to be implemented, Rib Mountain must establish a funding partnership with Wausau through a Memorandum of Agreement. State of Wisconsin Statute 66.1021(12) prevents a city transit system from providing service outside its municipal boundaries without funding from the neighboring jurisdiction to be served.

The funding partnership would identify the method of cost sharing. The two communities should share costs based on the percentage of revenue miles within each jurisdiction or, potentially, based on boardings within each jurisdiction (if automated passenger counter technology is added).

An example of a cost sharing agreement based on miles is as follows. The new Rib Mountain Extension Route would operate a total of approximately 7.2 miles of which 1.7 miles are within Wausau city limits and 5.5 miles within Rib Mountain, then Wausau would pay for approximately 24 percent of the total cost of the fixed route service while Rib Mountain would pay 76 percent of the cost (minus passenger fares and Federal grant revenues).

To meet Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements, Rib Mountain would also be responsible for the cost of ADA complimentary paratransit service for individuals with disabilities that are unable to access the fixed route service due to a disability. Typically, paratransit operating miles are 20–25% of the total fixed route service provided. Paratransit mileage would fluctuate based on demand and an estimate of the annual mileage would be developed and agreed upon by both parties.

Figure 30. Current Metro Ride Routes J and G and Proposed Rib Mountain Extension



Advantages

This alternative meets nearly half of the current Metro Ride riders desire (identified in the October 2021 rider survey) for transit service outside of Wausau. The route alternative creates many more employment opportunities for Wausau residents. The DMV for Marathon County and many lower-cost shopping destinations are also located along this route alternative in the southern portion of Rib Mountain.

Transit service in Rib Mountain will strengthen the local businesses' ability to hire, attract and retain employees who live in Wausau. Transit in Rib Mountain will enable residents without sufficient mobility options to travel to and from Wausau for medical appointments and to Rib Mountain destinations. With rising fuel prices and inflation, more residents may seek alternatives to their personal auto to save money. Employers on a bus route have access to a broader potential employee base. Based on U.S. Census data, approximately 7,819 residents would be within ¼ mile and 5,351 within ½ mile of the proposed service.

Finally, during the stakeholder interview process, one participant identified that "If it were available, the service would benefit young residents who need access to jobs or after school activities and international students attending technical college who need transportation during evenings and on weekends." This need would be more extensively met if Metro Ride service hours were expanded during the evenings past 6:30 PM (Scenario 1).

Disadvantages

The primary challenge is the development of an acceptable funding partnership between Wausau and Rib Mountain, which includes identifying new funding to support the route extension into Rib Mountain.

Staffing Implications

The service expansion would require one to three additional drivers for fixed route and ADA paratransit service.

Rider Implications

The alternative is estimated to carry seven passengers per hour, five days per week. Approximately 20,580 one-way rides would be provided per year.

Cost Implications

Projected costs for this fixed route are based on the projected 2023 hourly operating cost of \$132.86. With 2,940 hours per year, the total operating cost is estimated at \$390,608. The new route would operate 12 hours per day between Crossroads Country Market and the Bone & Joint Clinic in Rib Mountain as depicted in Figure 30. Additional ADA complementary paratransit service cost of approximately 100 per hour would need to be estimated in addition to fixed routes. Paratransit services and can be estimated based on expected demand. Assuming the new route will require 4 hours per day paratransit service, the total annual cost of ADA paratransit would be \$98,000.

Total fixed route and ADA paratransit costs are estimated at approximately \$488,608.

Revenue Scenario

As previously noted, the costs for public transit service are covered by a combination of Federal, State, and local revenue plus passenger fares. The total cost described above represents the total operating cost for the new route (not including ADA paratransit service). That cost would be shared across Federal, State, and local sources. Passenger fare revenue also accounts for a portion of the revenue. The local share would need to be provided through an agreement between Rib Mountain and Wausau. The local share be divided based upon the number of miles operated in each community. Federal and State funding would be split as it is applied to all Metro Ride services. A scenario for the cost breakdown across revenue source is provided below for illustrative purposes. Numbers and percentages are estimates.

Table 12. New Rib Mountain Route Revenue Breakdown Scenario (Estimated costs and percentages)

Estimated Total Annual Fixed Route and Paratransit Operating Cost	=	\$488,608.00
Federal and State Revenue Sources (60%)	=	\$293,164.80
Local Funds (30%)	=	
from Wausau (24%)	=	\$35,179.78
from Rib Mountain (76%)	=	\$111,402.62
Passenger Fare Revenue (9%)	=	\$43,974.72
*Other (1%)	=	\$4,886.08

* If a third party is identified, a minor portion of the local share (one percent or more) may also be provided through a contract with the third party. For example, if a local business or human service agency in Rib Mountain recognizes the benefit of public transit for its consumers, that business may also contribute to the cost of service in exchange for the benefits it receives from public transit service.

B. Rib Mountain Hybrid On-Demand Microtransit and Point Deviation

An alternative to fixed route service in Rib Mountain is a hybrid microtransit service using a point deviation route with designated time points at key destinations, connecting to Metro Ride’s Route G. This option eliminates the requirement for ADA paratransit service, however, demand for ridership may still require multiple vehicles.

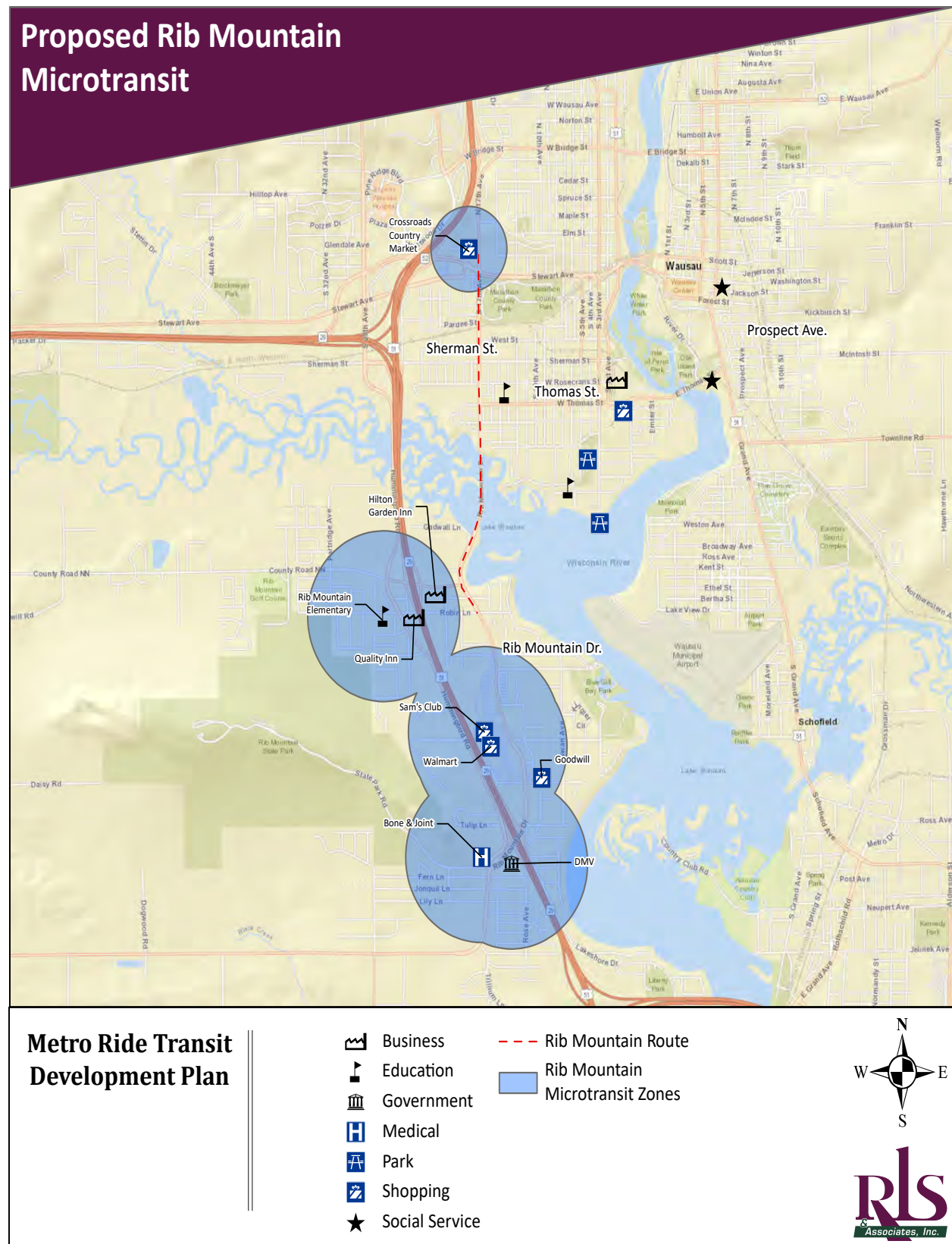
A small wheelchair accessible transit vehicle would travel along the designated route between Crossroads Country Market and Robin Lane in Rib Mountain. After it enters Rib Mountain, the vehicle would not operate on a fixed route with scheduled stops at the major destinations (including Walmart, Sams Club, and, on weekdays, the Bone and Join Clinic, Rib Mountain Elementary, and the DMV). In addition to scheduled stops, the vehicle will also deviate within a ½ mile radius of the bus stop to pick up or drop off passengers at requested destinations within the service zones. Passengers may call to request the vehicle picks them up at a specific location within the service zones. They also could walk to the nearest scheduled time point and board without a reservation. The On-Demand

Curb2Curb option offers a hybrid of scheduled bus service and microtransit options for passengers. The bus does not travel on a set route but does stop at predetermined time points. The schedule of when the bus will stop at the time points will be published. Connections with Route G at Cross Roads Country Market will occur at least once per hour.

Advantages

The advantage of the hybrid model is that trip requests will need to be grouped around the scheduled timepoints which will help Rib Mountain and Metro Ride control costs even as demand for service grows. While passengers can call to request a trip, the trips will be grouped based on the time when the vehicle is scheduled to be in their area. With projected high demand for transportation in Rib Mountain, the hybrid model will force passengers to adjust their schedules slightly to accommodate the bus schedule. This hybrid model is more likely to achieve ridership objectives rather than a more open microtransit option with vehicles running all over Rib Mountain strictly based on customer demand. With a point deviation service, Metro Ride is not obligated to offer ADA paratransit service so long as the vehicle is wheelchair accessible and will deviate to pick up any passenger within the established zone (of at least ¼ mile) from a designated time point.

Figure 31. Rib Mountain Hybrid On-Demand Microtransit and Point Deviation



Disadvantages

Demand potentially could quickly exceed microtransit in Rib Mountain. If demand exceeds resources, passengers will not be satisfied with extended wait times or lack of availability to get a ride when they want it. If demand increases beyond the capacity for the assigned vehicle(s), Rib Mountain and Metro Ride should consider transitioning to a fixed route (such as in Scenario 2.A). Alternatively, it could purchase microtransit vehicles that are larger than Metro Ride’s paratransit vehicles (8 passenger) but smaller than a large transit bus. Optional vehicles could have up to 24 seats. The disadvantage is that if microtransit is not successful, Metro Ride will have vehicles that are not appropriate for their other services. The fixed route option will be the most economical choice because it requires fewer drivers and vehicles.

Staffing Implications

One to three additional drivers would be needed for the expansion.

Rider Implications

The alternative is estimated to operate with five passengers per hour, five days per week. Approximately 14,700 one-way rides will be provided per year. This alternative is projected to have lower ridership than the fixed route option (which estimates about 20,000 rides per year) because the vehicle will be deviating to pick up people at the curb and will not have the time to

make as many stops as the scheduled fixed route service.

Cost Implications

Projected costs for this option are based on the Metro Ride projected 2023 hourly operating cost of \$132.86. With 2,940 hours per year, the operating cost is estimated at \$390,608 for the hybrid point deviation and microtransit service. An additional cost of \$40,000 is also included to support scheduling and dispatching for the on-demand service. The total cost is estimated to be \$430,608.

The overall cost of Scenario 2.B. is less than Scenario 2.A because 2.B does not require ADA paratransit service. However, **Scenario 2.B will have more limited capacity and provide fewer trips. If an additional vehicle is needed to support demand for this mode of service in Rib Mountain, costs will quickly escalate to account for additional drivers and vehicles.**

Revenue Scenario

As previously noted, the costs for public transit service are covered by a combination of Federal, State, and Local revenue plus passenger fares. Rib Mountain and Wausau would share the cost of the on-demand service based upon the number of miles operated in each community. The exact cost sharing agreement would need to be negotiated. Initial recommendations are similar to the fixed route cost sharing percentages because the vehicle will spend most of its time in Rib Mountain.

Table 13. Revenue Breakdown Scenario (Estimated costs and percentages)

Estimated Total Annual Operating Cost	=	\$430,608.00
Federal and State Revenue Sources (60%)	=	\$258,364.80
Local Funds (30%)	=	
	from Wausau (24%)	= \$31,003.78
	from Rib Mountain (76%)	= \$98,178.62
Passenger Fare Revenue (9%)	=	\$38,754.72
*Other (1%)	=	\$4,306.08

C. Route A Connection with Route into Schofield-Weston (Schofield-Weston Connector Route Alternative)

This Schofield-Weston Connector Route alternative is designed to reinstitute service to much of the areas previously served but with more focus on attracting riders living in multi-house complexes. The proposed extension would connect with Route A at the North Central Health Care Center, where passengers could transfer and complete their trip. The existing stop at North Central Health Care Center provides shelter and a safe waiting area.

Advantages

This alternative meets one of the top two Metro Ride rider and stakeholder priorities by expanding service into Schofield and Weston. The route would

also provide access to major employers and shopping areas including Greenheck, Pick n-Save, Aldi, and Target.

In addition, as is evident from the demographic profiles, both Schofield and Weston have a significant number of adults aged 65 or older. Older adults and individuals with disabilities are highly likely to be regular transit riders. The two groups account for 16.10 percent and 7.6 percent in Schofield and Weston, respectively.

Adding transit service would improve local access to affordable housing. The average rental cost in Schofield is about \$800 per month, which is more affordable than some other communities in the area. Weston also has a significant number of mobile homes, multi-unit residential homes, and apartments. The proposed route corridor would be conducive to transit ridership along Jalenek Avenue, Birch Street, and Mt. View Avenue areas connecting to work, shopping, or college.

Table 14. Key Demographics of Schofield and Weston, WI

	Schofield	Weston
Population	2,157	15,723
Square Miles	2.1	21.6
Median Household Income	\$48,654	\$77,388
Bachelor’s degree or Higher	18.10%	12.70%
65 years or older	17.10%	16%
Poverty rate (at or below)	21.70%	7.99%
Disability population	16.10%	7.60%
Auto ownership per household	2	2

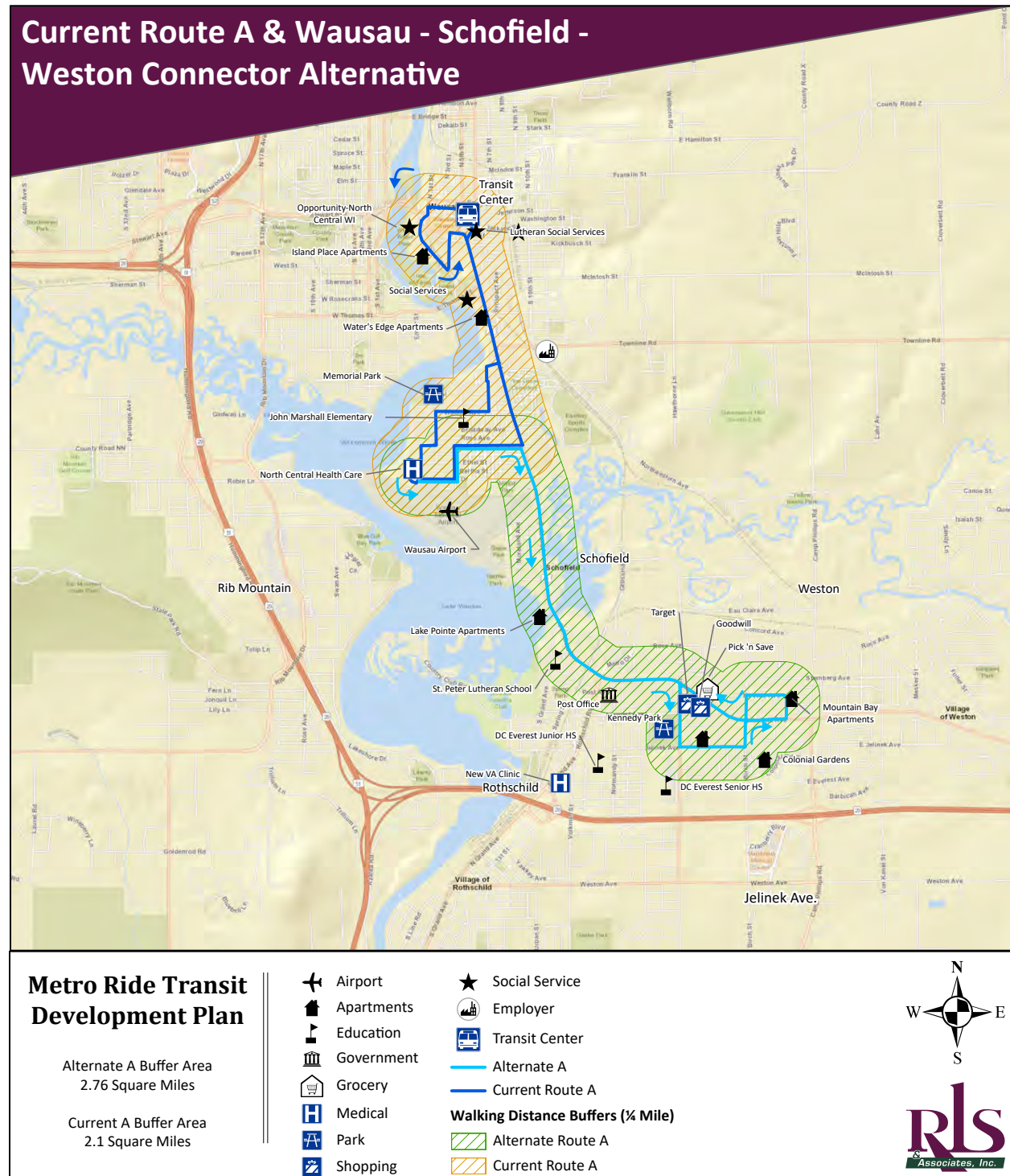
Source: 2020 US Census and 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate

The service provides employment opportunities for residents in Schofield, Weston, and Wausau in both directions. Younger adults and older adults retraining for a new career could reach North Central Technical College in Wausau.

Another potential advantage is a possible route connection with Rib Mountain (described later in this report). A Rib Mountain-Weston Connector

Route coupled with the Schofield-Weston Connector Route would form a complete loop and transit connection between Wausau, Rib Mountain, Weston and Schofield. This loop would significantly increase mobility options to most all desired destinations in the greater Wausau area for employment, shopping, educational, recreational, and social purposes.

Figure 32. Map of Route A with Connection to Schofield-Weston Alternative



Disadvantages

New fixed route service typically takes three to five years to reach its maximum ridership potential. With attractive and safe bus stops and shelters where stops are frequently used, over time the community will begin to see transit as a safe and reliable option for travel in and around the community. If a community is unwilling to patiently enable the service to mature as an integral asset to residents and businesses, the service may not withstand public scrutiny in the first two to three years.

Staffing Implications

The expansion would require one or two additional part time Metro Ride operators if it operates on a reduced schedule (i.e., only at peak hours).

Rider Implications

The alternative is estimated to operate with five passengers per hour, five days per week, 10 hours per day, with approximately 14,700 one-way rides provided per year.

Cost Implications

Projected costs for this route are based on the 2023 hourly operating cost of \$132.86. With 2,450

hours per year, the operating cost is estimated at \$325,507 for fixed route service. There is also an additional cost for ADA paratransit service in this model of approximately \$100 per hour. Assuming four hours per day of paratransit service (which could grow to as much as 12 hours per day), the total cost for paratransit would be an additional \$98,000. The total cost for the scenario is estimated to be \$423,507.

Revenue Scenario

As previously noted, the costs for public transit service are covered by a combination of Federal, State, and Local revenue plus passenger fares. Schofield, Weston and Wausau would share the cost of the route based upon the number of miles operated in each community.

Wisconsin requires Schofield and Weston to be funding partners with Metro Ride, as was previously done, in order for Metro Ride to serve the communities with fixed route service. A funding partnership between Schofield, Weston, and Wausau would specify the method of cost sharing. Many systems opt to share in funding for new service provided like this by calculating the percentage of revenue miles within each jurisdiction and paying its portion of the total cost of the route that services multiple cities.

Table 15. Revenue Breakdown Scenario (Estimated costs and percentages)

Estimated Total Annual Operating Cost	=	\$423,507.00
Federal and State Revenue Sources (60%)	=	\$254,104.20
Local Funds (30%)	=	
from Wausau (24%)	=	\$30,492.50
from Schofield & Weston (76%)	=	\$96,559.60
Passenger Fare Revenue (9%)	=	\$38,115.63
*Other (1%)	=	\$4,235.07

D.1. Rib Mountain and Weston Connector Alternatives

Based on feedback from stakeholder interviews, some participants were interested in route alternatives to connect Rib Mountain and Weston. Survey results also indicate a strong pattern of travel needs between the two communities.

This alternative provides enhanced mobility for shopping, employment, social, and overall connectivity throughout the greater Wausau area with direct service between Rib Mountain and Weston.

Advantages

The Rib Mountain-Weston Connector Route Alternative 1 shown in Figure 33 would provide enhanced mobility options for many residents. This alternative includes portions of Schofield and Rothschild whose jurisdictions border this route corridor. If the Schofield-Weston Route includes a connection to Route A (to Wausau), the Rib Mountain-Weston Alternative 1 would create a full circle of mobility options for this geographic area. Smaller less expensive buses could be used to provide this connector service.

This alternative would also provide a connection to the VA Clinic in Rothschild. The clinic is expected to offer services for vision, hearing, and dental work. According to the American Community Survey (ACS) Five Year Estimates (2015–2019), an estimated 389 veterans reside in Rib Mountain, 2,559 in Wausau, and 1,077 in Weston for a total of 4,025—a significant population group in the area that could benefit greatly to access to VA Clinic medical services.

NOTE: If the Rib Mountain alternative is implemented, then the Rib Mountain-Weston Alternative 2 would be most appropriate to prevent duplication or overlap of routes. Alternative 2 would provide service from Route J to the DMV Office in Rib Mountain.

Disadvantages

As described previously, a funding partnership in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) would have to be executed by all jurisdictions agreeing to implement such a service under State of Wisconsin requirements. The agreement would also require financial commitments on ADA paratransit requirements. Specialized services (vans, taxis or other) must be provided for persons with disabilities who cannot access bus stop locations.

Staffing Implications

The expansion would require an additional part time Metro Ride operator, at minimum, if operated on a reduced schedule (i.e., only at peak hours).

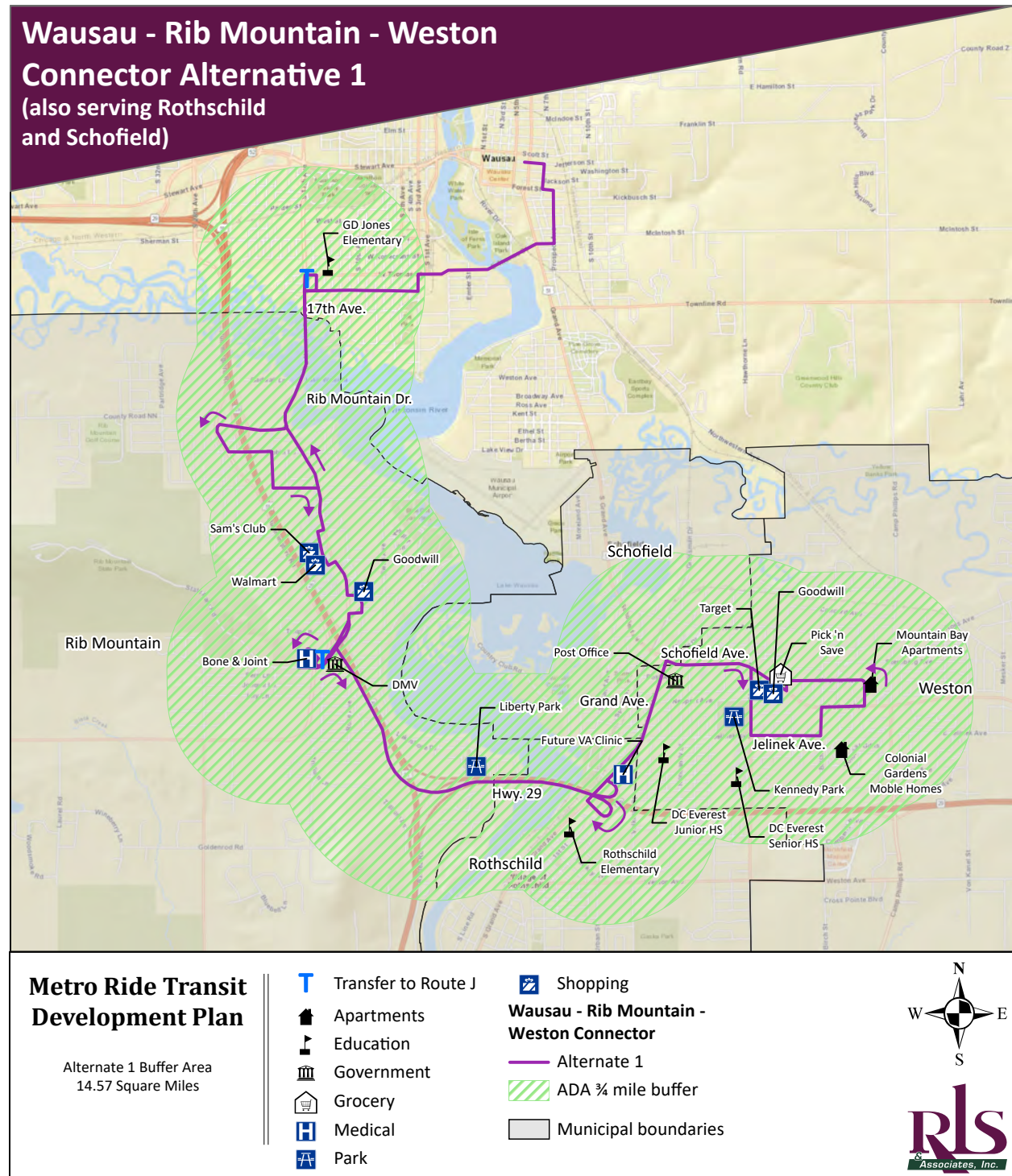
Rider Implications

The alternative is estimated to operate with three passengers per hour, five days per week, 10 hours per day. Approximately 7,350 one-way rides provided per year.

Cost Implications

Projected costs for this route are based on the 2023 hourly operating cost of \$132.86. With 2,450 hours per year, the operating cost is estimated at \$325,507 for fixed route service. There is also an additional cost of approximately \$100 per hour for ADA paratransit service in this model. Assuming the route could require four hours per day of paratransit service, the total cost would increase to \$98,000 per year.

Figure 33. Rib Mountain Connector Route Alternative 1



Revenue Scenario

As previously noted, the costs for public transit service are covered by a combination of Federal, State, and Local revenue plus passenger fares. Rib Mountain and Weston would establish a cost sharing agreement. An example scenario based on route miles is provided below for illustration. Exact percentages and amounts would need to be defined prior to implementation.

Table 16. Revenue Breakdown, Scenario D.1 (Estimated costs and percentages)

Estimated Total Annual Operating Cost	=	\$423,507.00
Federal and State Revenue Sources (60%)	=	\$254,104.20
Local Funds (30%)	=	
from Wausau (15%)	=	\$19,057.82
from Weston (30%)	=	\$38,115.63
from Rib Mountain (55%)	=	\$69,878.66
Passenger Fare Revenue (9%)	=	\$38,115.63
*Other (1%)	=	\$4,235.07

D.2. Rib Mountain-Weston Connector Route Alternative 2

This alternative does not extend into Wausau itself but would rely on the Rib Mountain alternative route with service from Wausau to Rib Mountain (Route G connection). Without that connection to Rib Mountain, this would be of little use to residents of Rib Mountain or Schofield and Weston.

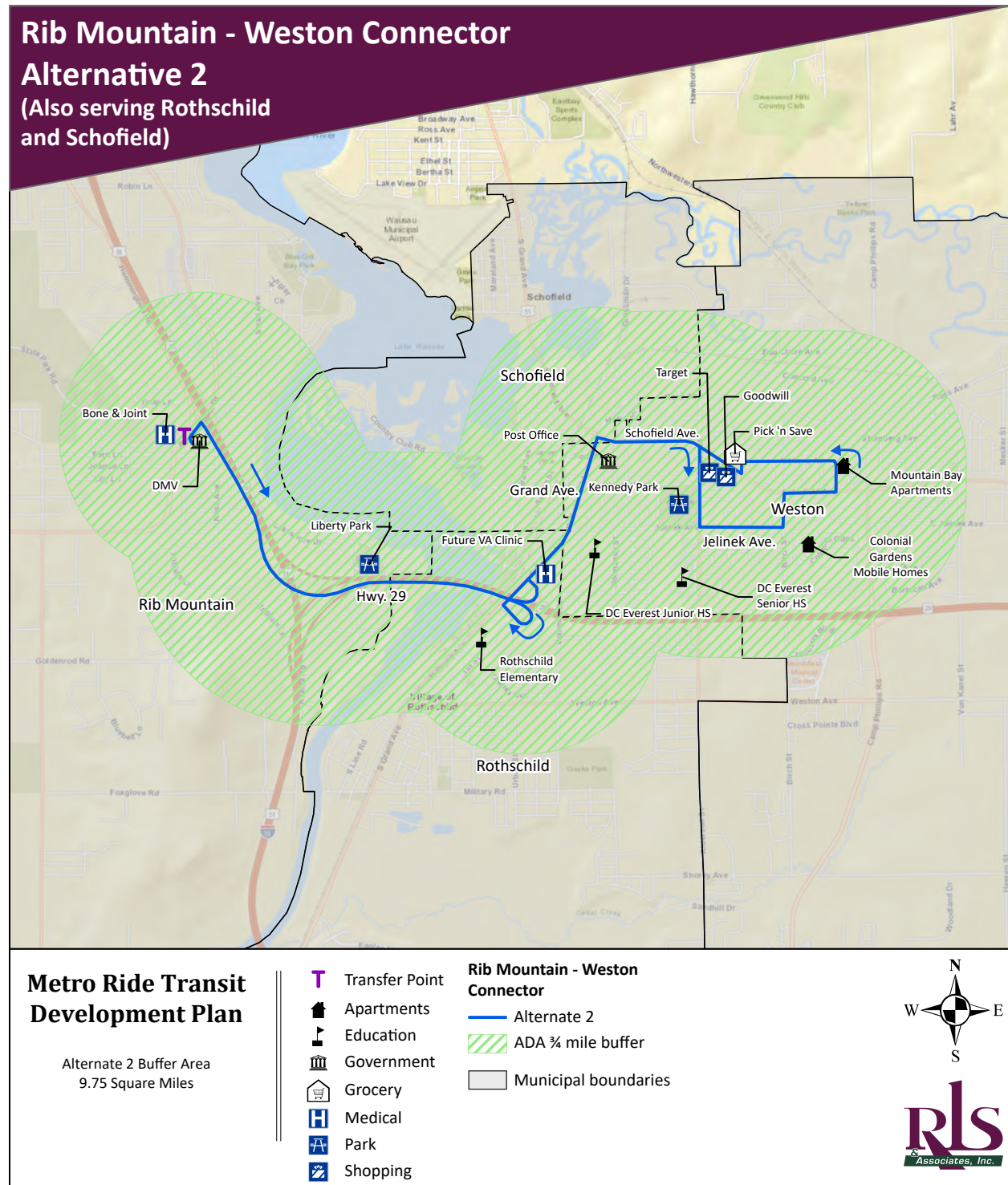
Advantages

Similar to Rib Mountain – Weston Connector Route Alternative 1, this route would significantly improve non-auto mobility options between the communities for employment, shopping, medical, educational, and social purposes.

Disadvantages

This alternative relies on implementation of the new service from Wausau to Rib Mountain. Without it, the service would only be from a small portion of Rib Mountain to Weston and not be highly productive in terms of ridership.

Figure 34. Rib Mountain-Weston Connector Route Alternative 2



E. Schofield Microtransit Zone

This option offers an alternative for Schofield in case Weston does not wish to implement public transit service. Popular destinations in Schofield and just outside the town line include Target, Pick-n-Save, ACE Hardware, and Greenheck.

Schofield microtransit demand response service operations and expenses could grow gradually with demand. The microtransit service would involve dedicating one or two paratransit vehicles to Schofield. Riders would travel between points in Schofield and to/from the North Central Health Care allowing passengers to transfer to Route A for a ride into Wausau.

Microtransit could provide on-demand transportation by accepting trip requests by phone or app from riders, then dispatching a vehicle. All trips will be shared-rides, meaning the vehicle may be shared by multiple passengers. Wheelchair accessible vehicle will be available. Service would be open to the general public. Metro Ride’s paratransit drivers and paratransit vehicles could provide the microtransit service, depending on the scale of service to be implemented. If Metro Ride opts to operate the service in-house, the technology could be purchased or obtained under contract with a third party.

Staffing Implications

The expansion requires 1.5 additional Metro Ride operators. Service may warrant an additional small

transit vehicle if a Metro Ride paratransit vehicle is not available.

Rider Implications

The alternative is estimated to operate with 2.5 passengers per hour, five days per week, 12 hours per day. Approximately 7,350 one-way rides provided per year.

Cost Implications

Projected costs for this service are based on the 2023 hourly operating cost of \$132.86. With 2,450 hours per year, the operating costs are projected to be approximately \$390,608. An additional cost of \$40,000 per year will be added to support the scheduler/dispatcher hours. This additional cost could be shared across multiple local communities if other microtransit services are implemented. Costs could be reduced if a non-CDL driver is hired to operate the service and smaller vehicles are used. Costs could also be reduced by limiting the hours of operation. Total estimated operating costs are \$430,608.

Revenue Scenario

The majority of service will be provided within Schofield and therefore costs will also be the responsibility of Schofield. Partnerships with local businesses and medical facilities that would benefit from the service could offer financial support (and multi-year commitments).

Table 17. Revenue Breakdown, Scenario E (Estimated costs and percentages)

Estimated Total Annual Operating Cost	=	\$430,608.00
Federal and State Revenue Sources (60%)	=	\$258,364.80
Local Funds (30%)	=	
from Wausau (10%)	=	\$12,918.24
from Schofield (60%)	=	\$77,509.44
*Other (30%)	=	\$38,754.72
Passenger Fare Revenue (10%)	=	\$43,060.80

Summary

Each alternative offers advantages and disadvantages associated with the level of service and convenience to the customer. The alternatives can be adjusted by modifying the daily hours of operation. For example, if certain connector routes operated only at peak hours, the annual operating costs would be appropriately reduced.

The Rib Mountain route connecting with Route G is projected to yield the highest ridership and therefore the most trips hour, mile, and dollar spent. Ridership on the other alternative routes is slightly lower due to the service area, mode of service, or reduced potential for demand. However, over time, ridership is likely to increase as more people become aware of the routes and start to ride. The projected operating characteristics are summarized below.

Table 18. Summary of Estimated Total Annual Operating Parameters

Service Component	Passenger Trips/Hour	Hours	Miles	Passenger Trips	Estimated Annual Operating Cost*
Route G Connect to Rib Mountain	7.0	2,940	23,667	20,580	\$537,343.80
Rib Mountain Hybrid Microtransit	5.0	2,940	23,667	14,700	\$430,608.40
Schofield Weston Connector	5.0	2,450	17,150	12,250	\$472,242.40
Rib Mountain Weston Connector	3.0	2,450	29,400	7,350	\$472,242.40
Schofield Microtransit Zone	2.5	2,940	TBD	7,350	\$430,608.40

*Does not include paratransit for fixed route services.

The following table summarizes the total cost of implementation if all options in Scenario 2 are selected. The table also indicates the significant revenue shortfall that would need to be recovered through partnerships with local municipalities and private businesses.

Table 19. Summary of Expenses and Revenue Needed to Implement Scenario 2 in Total

OPERATING, MAINTENANCE, ADMIN. EXPENSE	2021 Budget	2022 Budget	2023 Projected	2024 Projected	2025 Projected	2026 Projected
Vehicle Operations	\$2,114,519.27	\$2,135,769.01	\$2,199,842.08	\$2,265,837.34	\$2,333,812.46	\$2,403,826.84
Paratransit Services	\$216,994.51	\$200,615.77	\$206,634.24	\$212,833.27	\$219,218.27	\$225,794.82
Vehicle Maintenance	\$390,263.72	\$416,597.56	\$429,095.49	\$446,259.31	\$459,647.09	\$473,436.50
Non-Vehicle Maintenance	\$201,461.63	\$240,231.78	\$247,438.73	\$254,861.90	\$262,507.75	\$270,382.98
General Administration	\$778,999.82	\$795,524.68	\$819,390.42	\$843,972.13	\$869,291.30	\$895,370.04
Contract Expense (s.85.205 ADA Funds)	(\$34,108.00)	(\$36,679.00)	(\$36,679.00)	(\$36,679.00)	(\$36,679.00)	(\$36,679.00)
CARES Act Funds	(\$425,000.00)					
Subtotal Existing Expenses	\$3,243,130.95	\$3,752,059.80	\$3,865,721.96	\$3,987,084.95	\$4,107,797.87	\$4,232,132.17
SCENARIO 2 EXPANDED SERVICE AREA						
Route G: Connection to Rib Mountain or Rib Mountain Hybrid Microtransit			\$537,303.80	\$548,049.88	\$559,010.87	\$570,191.09
Route A Connection with Schofield Weston Route w/ Paratransit			\$472,700.00	\$589,507.00	\$589,507.00	\$589,507.00
Rib Mountain and Weston Connector Alternatives			\$472,242.00	\$457,507.00	\$457,507.00	\$457,507.00
Schofield Microtransit Zone (12 hours/day)			\$430,608.00	\$390,608.00	\$390,608.00	\$390,608.00
TOTAL EXPENSES (Current plus New)	\$3,243,130.95	\$3,752,059.80	\$5,778,575.76	\$5,972,756.82	\$6,104,430.74	\$6,239,945.26
TOTAL REVENUE	Budget	Budget	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated	Estimated
Federal Operating Assistance + State Operating Assistance s. 85.20	\$1,100,439.29	\$2,063,632.89	\$3,178,216.67	\$3,285,016.25	\$3,357,436.91	\$3,431,969.89
American Recovery Act Funds (Technology)						
American Recovery Act/WisDOT funds (Farebox Replacement)						
Federal Capital Assistance (Maintenance)	\$0.00	\$-				
Marathon County Surcharge	\$0.00	\$-				
State Elderly and Disabled - S85.21	\$73,008.31	\$64,286.10	\$73,008.31	\$73,008.31	\$73,008.31	\$73,008.31
Public Charges for Service (Fares)	\$259,206.24	\$237,843.06	\$264,390.36	\$269,678.17	\$272,374.95	\$275,098.70
Advertising Revenue	\$15,538.27	\$50,106.93	\$15,539.27	\$15,540.27	\$15,541.27	\$15,542.27
Paratransit Services	\$12,207.50	\$11,520.00	\$12,329.58	\$12,329.58	\$12,329.58	\$12,329.58
Intergovernmental Charges (Wausau School District)	\$12,488.20	\$11,900.52	\$12,488.20	\$12,488.20	\$12,488.20	\$12,488.20
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$0.00	\$-				
ARPA Funds						
General Property Tax (City of Wausau)	\$889,891.72	\$1,312,770.30	\$916,588.47	\$916,588.47	\$916,588.47	\$916,588.47
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,243,130.95	\$3,752,059.80	\$4,472,560.86	\$4,584,649.25	\$4,659,767.69	\$4,737,025.42
Projected Revenue Increase		16%	19%	22%	2%	2%
Revenue Shortfall (to be addressed through additional local match)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$1,306,014.90)	(\$1,388,107.57)	(\$1,444,663.05)	(\$1,502,919.84)