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WISPIRG: Grassroots Organizing, Advocacy & Research

WISPIRG: Standing Up To Powerful Interests

Electric Buses
Clean Transportation for Healthier Neighborhoods and Cleaner Air

Frontier Group
WISPIRG
Wisconsin Environmental Defense Fund
At the Climate Fast Forward conference, we discussed how increasing efficiency and reducing energy demand across sectors — particularly in buildings and transportation — will help us meet our emission reduction goals.

Today, we’ll focus on the transportation sector.
Transportation: The Problem

The transportation sector is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Wisconsin.

It’s the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S.

Image credit: Gregg May, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin (based on U.S. EIA)
Transportation: The Problem

Our car-centered transportation system also exacerbates **societal inequities**, contributes to **adverse public health outcomes**, and generally degrades **quality of life** in our communities.

*Image credit: Lorenz Markus Flickr, CC BY 2.0*
Transportation: The Solution

We need a comprehensive strategy to cut emissions from transportation.

On the one hand, this means electrifying cars, buses, and other modes. But just as important: Reducing energy use by making it easier and more enjoyable for people to get around without needing to drive.

A comprehensive strategy will be more effective, more resilient and more equitable than just relying on electrification.
What does a comprehensive strategy look like?

1. Electrify everything

2. Less driving through:
   - Compact communities
   - More transit
   - More walking and biking
   - Smart pricing

Image credit: David Wilson, CC BY 2.0; Chicago Bicycle Program, CC BY-2.0; CC0; Eric Wheeler, Metro Transit, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0; jonnyfixedgear, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0
Policy Priorities

- Prioritize **smart growth**.
- Increase **public transit** service to double ridership by 2030.
- Double the number of **active transportation** trips by 2030 by building out walking and biking infrastructure.
- Expand **shared mobility** (bike-share, car-share etc.).
- Implement **smart pricing** to assess the true cost of driving (e.g. through tolling, demand-based road pricing, congestion pricing, parking reform etc.)
What emissions reductions could these priorities accomplish?

- **Land use changes**: 5 to 16 percent reduction.
- **Expanding public transit**: 1 to 4 percent reduction.
- **Active transportation**: 0.4 to 1 percent reduction.
- **Shared mobility**: 1 to 4 percent reduction.
- **Smart pricing**: 4 to 11 percent reduction.
Taken together: 25+ percent emission reductions by 2050

Smart Growth

Transit

Active Transportation

Shared Mobility

Smart Pricing
Barriers to Reform

- Economic investment in the status quo
- Longevity of our built infrastructure
- Special interest influence (fossil fuel industries, automakers, …)
- Negative perceptions of public transit
- “Car culture”
Pause for questions
Continuing the Climate Fast Forward Discussion

Through small group discussions, Climate Fast Forward participants developed short- and long-term recommendations to reduce energy use.

One of these recommendations was to encourage employers to invest in public transit and active transportation to help tackle “car culture.”
Reducing Car Commuting in Seattle

Number of commuters who drove to work alone (in 2017):

- **Madison**: 66 percent
- **Chicago**: 49 percent
- **Seattle**: 25 percent — despite adding 60,000 jobs since 2010

Source: Nick Williams, Milwaukee Business Journal; Laura Bliss, CityLab
Image credit: B. Katz via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0
Reducing Car Commuting in Seattle

2010 – 2017 Commute Mode Change – Overall City Center
Respondents who started work between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. on weekdays

Transit
42% 43% 45% 47% 48%

SOV
35% 34% 31% 30% 25%

Rideshare
10% 9% 9% 9% 10%

Walk
6% 6% 7% 6% 8%

Bike
3% 3% 3% 3% 3%

Image credit: Commute Seattle/Seattle DOT (via CityLab)
Reducing Car Commuting in Seattle

In addition to investing heavily in public transportation at the regional and local level, Seattle works closely with major employers to discourage solo car commuting.

These employers include Expedia, Microsoft, Amazon, and the Gates Foundation.
The Gates Foundation reduced the number of solo commuters from 88 percent in 2010 to 30 percent by 2016. Measures include:

- **Disincentivizing parking** by charging a daily rather than monthly rate.
- **Rewarding non-car commutes** with a $3/day award.
- **Incentivizing other modes and car-sharing** with free transit passes and Zipcar hours.

Source: Paul Mackie, Mobility Lab; Laura Bliss, CityLab
Example: The Gates Foundation

The Gates Foundation used its move to a new location to create a transportation demand management plan that would help change employee behavior.

Image credit: Wonderlane, Flickr, Creative CC BY 2.0
Other Examples of Behavior Change: Durham, NC

An experimental collaboration between the city and employers cut solo-car commuting by over 5 percent through:

- E-mails with personalized route maps and health, financial etc. benefits of bus/bike commuting.
- A weekly lottery with prizes for bus commuters

Image credit: City of Durham
Discussion: What else can employers do?
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