A vibrant transportation system is vital to the economy of SE Wisconsin. Good public transit is an essential component that is needed to get and keep people educated and working, and businesses growing jobs. Transit is important in building economic competitiveness and attracting and retaining businesses and the talent that they seek.

New dynamics have exacerbated a dangerous historic trend of increasing barriers to employment and workforce development, and access for students, customers, and tourists.

Transit has been reduced more than 20% over the past decade in the region, and fares increased between 20% and 100%.

A 10% cut in state transit funding in the 2011-13 state budget resulted in substantial transit cuts across the region.

Milwaukee County maintained most transit service in 2011-13 by using one-time federal funding from a shelved project to help mitigate the cut in State funding. The one-time federal funding will expire in 2014 leaving a $7 million gap in the MCTS annual operating budget. A loss of this magnitude can only result in significant service cuts.

In addition, state adjustments for inflation have not been realized, reducing buying power by 2% - 3% per year for local transit systems, $1.4 million per year for Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS).

The 2013-15 proposed state budget for transportation calls for: continuing the harmful 10% cuts in state funding, and undermining transit sustainability by moving it out of the segregated Transportation Fund. It would then compete with every non-transportation program.

Without a change in the proposed Biennial Budget, communities across the region will continue to lose vital transit connections.

These priorities are essential to preserving transit services:

1. Restore state transit operating aids that were cut in the 2011-13 biennial budget, to maintain current transit service levels.

2. Maintain transit funding from the segregated Transportation Fund, to provide crucial funding stability. Transit is as integral a part of the transportation system as roads and requires the same stable dedicated funding from the segregated funding source.

The amount to restore the state transit funding cuts is just one half of one percent of the $6.4 Billion Transportation Fund biennial budget. Transit does so much for a small investment.