

# Wisconsin Public Transportation Association: Statement on Gov. Evers' Executive Budget

Posted on Thursday, Feb 16, 2023

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The Wisconsin Public Transportation Association (WIPTA) commends Governor Evers for his executive budget proposal, particularly as it relates to statewide transit funding.

Due to the pandemic, public transportation networks were severely impacted with greatly reduced ridership and significantly reduced fare box revenue. Federal relief dollars were a vital lifeline for every system during those times. As Wisconsin continues to work to address employee shortages and the needs of the business community, the need for adequate public transportation funding is more pronounced than ever.

We thank Governor Evers for the proposed 4% increase to state mass transit aids. As our entire state and country grapples with inflation, transit systems are facing many of the same familiar challenges, including increased gas prices. Meanwhile, state funding for mass transit aids is 4% lower – in real dollars – than it was in 2012. This long-term trend has resulted in increased costs to local government, reduced services, and the inability for our statewide transit systems to keep up with the needs and demands of their communities. Local businesses especially feel the impacts as over half of the rides provided by our bus systems are to get employees back and forth to work.

In addition, the Governor proposed 4% increases to paratransit and elderly and disabled (specialized) transportation aids. These services are incredibly important to our most vulnerable residents but are extremely expensive to provide. Increases are desperately needed.

WIPTA also strongly supports Governor Evers' creation of a much-needed statewide transit capital assistance program. Bus systems continue to lack the resources needed to replace inefficient buses that have passed their useful lives and other unmet capital needs. This program and funding would be an enormous help.

Finally, WIPTA appreciates the inclusion of language that would allow local units of government to choose to finance public transportation via a regional transit authority.

We look forward to working closely with the Legislature to turn the corner on providing the services our local businesses and communities so strongly desire and rely on.