



TRANSIT DIRECTOR



EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT



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TRANSIT DIRECTOR WAUSAU, WISCONSIN

THE POSITION IN BRIEF – the Transit Director leads and manages the City’s Metro Ride fixed-route bus system available to the general public, and paratransit service. The Director oversees a budget of over \$3.7 million and an authorized staff of 32.50

THE COMMUNITY – The [City of Wausau](#) (pop. 39,000) is located in Marathon County, and is 95 miles northwest of Green Bay. Wausau is the principal city and transportation hub of northern and central Wisconsin and the gateway to Wisconsin’s Northwoods. Wausau anchors a growing combined metropolitan statistical area of over 308,000 people.

Wausau’s history and development is directly tied to the Wisconsin River, which runs through it. Early in the City’s history, the river served as a means of transportation, first for Native Americans and later for the explorers who came to the area. It then became a highway to float logs down as well as a source of power to run the saw mills for the logging industry. Incorporated in 1872, Wausau today is a bustling, family-friendly city with a vital commercial and retail district. The City’s geographic location provides excellent transportation access and year round sports and recreational activities.

CITY GOVERNMENT – The City of Wausau is a progressive, dynamic, full-service municipal organization. The City is governed by a Mayor who is elected at large, together with 11 Alderpersons, one from each of the 11 districts covering the City. The Development Director is appointed by and reports to the Mayor.

The City has more than 350 full, part-time and seasonal employees. There are 11 departments reporting to the Mayor and City Council including Police, Fire, Public Works, Assessor, Community Development, Customer Service, Human Resources, City Attorney, Parks, Airport and Transit. The City’s total FY 2023 general fund budget equals about \$40 million; all funds is approximately \$119 million.

WAUSAU SNAPSHOT AND COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

Households: **18,650**

Equalized Assessed Value: **\$3.34** billion

Land Area: **18** square miles

Median Home Value: **\$121,900**

Median Household Income: **\$46,824**

[The Middle-Class Paradise](#) Time

[#1 Safest Metro Area in the Midwest](#) FBI

[Top 10 Safest Cities in Wisconsin](#) Safe Home

[#2 Best City for Biking](#) People for Bikes

[#1 Best Small City for Business Services](#) Jobs New Geography

[Top 10 Best Cities for Return on Salary](#) Career Cast

[Top 10 Best Bang For Your Buck](#) Cities Forbes

[Top 10 Under The Radar Tech Cities](#) CIO Magazine

[Marathon County Economy Overview](#) by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission





THE NEXT TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Development Director is responsible for leading a department of 32.5 employees, most of which are unionized. The Director also manages a budget of approximately \$ 3.7 million. Fifty to sixty percent of the system's current revenues are from state and federal funds, including an infusion of more than \$1 million in CARES funding. Fares make up about 10% of the system's revenues, with the balance provide through the City's tax levy. The environment the next Transit Director can expect includes:

Wausau is the principal city and transportation hub of northern and central Wisconsin and the gateway to Wisconsin's Northwoods. Wausau anchors a growing combined metropolitan statistical area of over 308,000 people. Its expanding businesses remain strong with nationally and globally recognized firms in diverse fields including building materials, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, information technology and insurance. Wausau's recently expanded Business Campus now includes over 1,000 acres of commercial and industrial properties and thousands of employees. It is also home to the [Entrepreneurial and Education Center \(EEC\)](#) incubator with over 30 active tenants.

Wausau is also the physical, economic, social and cultural heart of northern and central Wisconsin. It is home to the largest hospital, largest performing arts theater, and largest public events in nearly 100 miles. The [Wausau River District](#) is alive with local and national retail, entertainment and major offices surrounding the landmark "400 Block" public square. A revitalized urban waterfront along the Wisconsin River – "Riverlife" – encompasses mixed use entertainment, office and residential development along an extensive trail and parkland system.

With these factors in play, the new Director has an opportunity to capitalize on the area's economic conditions and factors by identifying how public transit can play a larger role in enhancing economic and community development. In addition, and in light of the system's challenges where past municipal partners have retrenched and no longer subscribe to Metro Ride, a vision for what public transportation could be and how it could additionally enhance the greater Wausau area – on both a residential and commercial basis – are an opening for bold thinking and expansive vision.

A recent (August 2022) [Transportation Development Plan \(TDP\)](#) was completed. It was prompted by the transit ridership decline, changes in demand from within Wausau and its surrounding communities, and potential for applying new service modes and transit technologies. The TDP process was initiated in 2021 with guidance and input from the Marathon County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Metro Ride, a Project Oversight Committee, and local stakeholders.

TRANSIT DEPARTMENT

Metro Ride's mission is to provide citizens with access to the community by providing timely, dependable, "people-oriented" public transit services. High value, safe transit service benefits the community through significant cost savings for the user and decreased public expenditures for more costly alternatives.

This organization is responsible for planning and administering transit services in the community. Services provided include fixed-route bus service and ADA paratransit service for the disabled. All services are open and available to the general public. Metro Ride is responsible for submitting applications for federal and state grant funds and for maintaining compliance with federal and state transit program requirements.

Currently Metro Ride provides seven fixed-route bus service (more during the school year) within city limits, currently more than 460,000 rides per year. The route design resembles a wheel, with the Wausau Transit Center as the spoke and routes radiating to and from the center. The central hub is located at 555 Jefferson Street in downtown Wausau. Passengers can transfer from one route to another at the Transit Center. All routes operate at 30-minute intervals, meaning passengers can catch the bus at the transit center or any point along the route every 30 minutes. Metro Ride also offers Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit service to eligible individuals within three quarters of a mile from any regular bus route.

Metro Ride currently operates within the corporate limits of the city of Wausau, about 20 square miles. Most of the City is within walking distance of Metro Ride stops. The main exception is the Wausau West Industrial Park. Discontinued Metro Ride routes have served neighboring towns including Schofield, Rothschild, and Weston. Metro Ride has a fleet of 22 buses. Eighteen of the 22 vehicles are used during peak service. Seven new buses were recently added to the fleet.

Four smaller vehicles are available for paratransit service. All vehicles are equipped for wheelchair accessibility, and fixed route buses have bicycle racks. Presently, Metro Ride service is provided 12 hours/day.

THE NEXT TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

An extensive outreach effort resulted in broad input into the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. Community engagement activities were conducted in a variety of ways including rider and public surveys, public meetings, interviews with local officials from Wausau and surrounding municipalities, meetings with local employers and agencies, and the use of focus groups. The study provides a number of scenarios and considerations. The next Director can expect the plan to be a significant feature of his/her efforts in moving the agency forward.

According to the five-year TDP, "improving the rider experience is a top priority for Metro Ride's technology enhancement plan. Riders will benefit from having information to plan trips, to know when to wait at a bus stop, to prepay the fare, to know which bus to board and where to alight. Metro Ride also intends to use technology improvements to reduce the administrative time." Technology improvements needed include such enhancements as: Real-time bus location technology, on-board annunciators, advanced fare collection technology, and automated passenger counters, to name a few. Accordingly, the next Director should embrace the chance to upgrade the system, while also being fiscally adept at leveraging grants and other sources of revenue in order to accomplish these goals.

The challenges that every employer has in 2022 – attracting and retaining employees – is also the case for Wausau Transit. Recent significant increases in drivers' pay approved by the City Council has aggressively sought to address those competitive factors, yet a close eye and on-going diligence in this area will be at the forefront for the next Director.





THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

MUST HAVES

Candidates should have an equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities, as outlined below:

- A Bachelor's degree in public administration, planning, transportation or closely related field, or any equivalent combination of training and experience that brings the knowledge, abilities, skills and leadership to the delivery of contemporary public transportation services;
- Seven – 10 years of progressively responsible transportation administrative experience, with supervisory experience preferred; and
- The ability to attain and maintain a Class B CDL w/ air brake and passenger endorsement.
- A collaborative and communicative approach to work; a record in maintaining collegial working relationships in an unionized environment is ideal.
- Strong managerial and leadership skills.
- A record of experience that demonstrates the ability to see the "big picture" of how public transportation can dovetail into and enhance the region's overall community development goals.

MANAGEMENT STYLE AND PERSONAL TRAITS

- A motivating, empathetic and highly collaborative leader who can build relationships across the organization.
- A skilled manager able to assess the skills of the team and build upon their strengths.
- An excellent communicator, orally and written, who can engage with a wide variety of stakeholders internally and externally.
- A strong advocate for sustainable public transit.
- Be an advocate of technological solutions and have a contemporary outlook on how public transportation can be relevant to the public's lives and situations.
- Trustworthy and transparent with a strong sense of personal and professional integrity.
- Knowledgeable in all aspects of public transit, including emerging needs and trends.
- A creative problem solver who is willing to work through the immediate challenges to build a stronger future.
- Have management experience in creating an environment of trust, integrity and mentorship where employees respect one another and where the Department consistently functions at a high level of customer service.
- Be proactive, anticipatory and innovative; be someone who can make difficult decisions and stand behind those decisions.
- Be willing to keep the Mayor and others apprised of major activities in a consistent and timely manner, passing on both "good news and bad news" in a tactful, self-confident and professional manner.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

A starting salary range of \$97,800 – 115,000 (FY 2023 midpoint) +/- DOQ, plus excellent benefits, is offered.

HOW TO APPLY

Candidates should apply by November 28, 2022, with resume, cover letter and contact information for five work-related references to www.GovHRjobs.com to the attention of Lee Szymborski, Senior Vice President, GovHR USA, 630 Dundee Road, #225, Northbrook, IL 60062. Tel: 847-380-3240. The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



www.GovHRjobs.com