**Fiscal Facts: Cuts in bus service linked to further ridership declines**

Although bus ridership declined among most of Wisconsin’s largest transit systems between 2014 and 2017, research and recent experience suggest cutting services likely would create a further downward spiral.

Between 2000 and 2010, the Milwaukee County Transit System cut routes and service frequency. As a result, the transit system’s total service (vehicle miles traveled) dropped 21.2%, from 22.2 million miles to 17.5 million. While other factors may have contributed, ridership decreased 29.4%, from 52.9 million rides to 37.5 million during that decade.

Academic research also has found similar links. A recent study of the 25 largest transit systems in the U.S. and Canada found service levels and car ownership are the strongest determinants of transit ridership.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education.*