



September 16, 2014

Mayor Don Merkes  
City of Menasha  
140 Main Street  
Menasha, WI 54952

Dear Mayor Merkes,

Since October 2007, Valley Transit, in partnership with United Way Fox Cities, has been providing employment transportation to second and third shift workers who travel outside of Valley Transit's normal operating hours and workers who are beyond a reasonable walk to a bus route. The program was developed based on a need identified in the 2006 Life Study that one of the major challenges for many seeking employment in the Fox Cities was the lack of reliable transportation to get them there. The reason a demand responsive service was chosen is because of the small number of trips taken to any location at a particular time. Demand responsive service was more cost-effective than running additional fixed route service hours or to destinations beyond current routes.

United Way has paid a total of almost \$400,000 to support the Connector since its inception in 2007 and United Way partners have paid an additional \$87,000 during that time. Since all communities and many businesses benefit from their citizens being able to get to jobs, it seems reasonable for the municipalities to start paying part of the local share. United Way is willing to continue to support the service because of its benefit to the Fox Cities but is unable to carry the entire local share burden.

The local share each year is approximately \$120,000. We are proposing that collectively, the municipalities pay \$30,000 (25%) of the local share this year if it does not increase the municipal shares budgeted for 2014. The municipal share would be based on the percent of total Connector trips taken to or from the community during the last full operating year (2013). In addition, Valley Transit is proposing to put \$30,000 of the Connector local share funding into the 2015 municipal share budget.

Without participation by the municipalities it is unlikely that the Connector can continue to operate to provide more than 17,000 trips per year, over 90% of which are for employment and 4% for education.

Initially the service was paid for by federal and state funds that were designated for employment transportation and the local share was paid for by United Way and its partners. In 2013, when the new surface transportation bill, MAP-21, was passed, the percent of the cost



that could be covered by federal and state operating funds was reduced and therefore the local share increased. The number of Connector trips has continued to increase each year. The surveys of people using the Connector indicate that it would be difficult or impossible for them to get to the job without the service. The customers are paying a premium for the privilege of using the Connector. The fares are \$4.00 plus the regular bus fare (\$1.80) for those using the Connector to connect to Valley Transit's fixed route and \$6.00 for trips from 10 p.m. to midnight and from 4-6 a.m. when Valley Transit isn't operating.

I have attached a sheet showing the percent of trips that either started or ended in Menasha, the major origins and destinations for trips in Menasha and Menasha's share of the cost of the Connector for 2014 and 2015.

Please let me know by email or phone whether you would like to discuss this further, who on your staff you would like me to work with, and what the next steps are for us to get approval to pay the share this year out of the budgeted amount and to include it in the budget for next year. My direct number is 920-832-2291 and my email address is [deborah.wetter@appleton.org](mailto:deborah.wetter@appleton.org).

Sincerely,



Deborah S. Wetter  
General Manager, Valley Transit

cc: Linda Stoll

## City of Menasha – Connector Trips 2013

Percent of total trips originating or ending in Menasha –4.8%

Major pick up and drop off locations in Menasha:

Residential Address	57%
Menasha Hotel	14%
Banta School	11%
RR Donnely	7%
Alliance Industries	3%
Orbis	2%
All Others	6%

**2014 Cost to Menasha of Connector Service (4.8% of \$30,000) - \$1,440**

**2015 Cost to Menasha of Connector Service (4.8% of \$30,000) = \$1,440**