



JobLines

An Analysis of Milwaukee County Transit System Routes 6 and 61

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About this report

This report was written by Joel Rast, associate professor of political science and urban studies and director of the Center for Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Research assistance was provided by Lisa Heuler Williams, who led the survey and interview teams, and by Catherine Madison, who did the GIS, mapping, and data analysis. Additional research assistance was performed by Shuayee Ly. We are grateful to the Milwaukee County Transit System for sharing data that was used in the preparation of this study.

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Executive Summary

This study examines the effectiveness of Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) bus routes 6 and 61, also known as JobLines, in providing access to suburban job locations for residents of inner-city Milwaukee neighborhoods. These two bus routes, which connect Milwaukee residents with job locations in Waukesha and Washington Counties, were established in 2015 to mitigate traffic congestion problems associated with the reconstruction of Milwaukee's Zoo Interchange. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration agreed to provide temporary funding for the bus lines to settle a lawsuit filed by the Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin. The funding is set to expire at the end of 2018, meaning that a new revenue source will have to be identified if the bus routes are to continue operating beyond this year.

Principal findings:

JobLines routes 6 and 61 provide service to 693 employers who have no other bus service besides one of these two bus routes. These establishments employ a total of 14,993 workers. This means that nearly 700 employers and 15,000 jobs currently accessible by transit will be beyond the reach of the regional transit system should the bus routes be discontinued.

Passengers on routes 6 and 61 are, for the most part, African-American residents of low- to moderate-income areas of Milwaukee's West Side. Most are using the bus to get to and from a job, and most are heavily reliant on public transit, either because they have no access to a car or because they do not have a valid driver's license.

The inner-city neighborhoods served by routes 6 and 61 include the most economically disadvantaged areas of the city, as well as the city's most racially segregated areas. Employment rates in these areas are more than 20 points below that of the Milwaukee metro area as a whole.

Employers located along routes 6 and 61 are facing significant labor shortages. Most employers interviewed for this study saw the JobLines as beneficial, either because their employees were presently using the service or because it was a way of enlarging their pool of job applicants. Support for transit service was expressed more strongly by employers along route 61 than route 6, with some exceptions.

Recommendations:

There is a pressing need for better transit linkages between Milwaukee's inner city and outlying suburbs. We urge decisionmakers to take this need into account in determining the fate of the JobLines bus routes.

Should the decision be made to continue service beyond 2018, we recommend that careful consideration be given to the configuration of these routes, especially route 6, to be sure that the buses serve those locations where the greatest number of passengers want to go. In some

cases, it may be possible to shorten bus routes while disadvantaging few if any passengers, lessening commute times to more heavily visited destinations.

We also recommend careful consultation with employers in any reconfiguration and rescheduling of bus routes, so that information about shift times and demand for bus service is incorporated into decisionmaking processes. This information could be obtained through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or some combination of the three. The relatively low ridership numbers on route 6 suggest that more meaningful coordination with employers will be especially crucial if this bus line is to remain viable.

Finally, we recommend consideration of these routes for incorporation into plans for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that would provide quicker and more direct transit service between the city of Milwaukee and surrounding suburbs. We urge that plans for BRT prioritize the need to connect low-income residents of Milwaukee's inner city with employers in Waukesha, Washington, and Ozaukee Counties. Certain areas presently served by routes 6 and 61 might be more efficiently served by BRT.

Introduction

This study examines the effectiveness of Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) bus routes 6 and 61 in providing access to suburban job locations for residents of inner-city Milwaukee neighborhoods. These two bus routes were established in 2015 as a result of a lawsuit filed by the Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin against the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), alleging that planning for WisDOT's Zoo Interchange highway reconstruction project failed to consider the transportation needs of economically disadvantaged residents, including minority populations. In a settlement reached in May 2014, WisDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) agreed to provide temporary funding for new bus lines serving low-income and minority neighborhoods. The state funding will expire at the end of 2018, meaning that MCTS routes 6 and 61, both financed through settlement funds, will be discontinued unless alternative revenue sources can be identified. This study examines the current performance of routes 6 and 61 (branded by MCTS as JobLines in 2016), considering in particular any adverse impacts to low-income and minority residents that may result should the bus lines be discontinued.

The study has four parts. We begin with an analysis of bus service to employers, identifying the locations of all employers served by routes 6 or 61 and focusing in particular on those employers served only by these bus routes. We provide data on the numbers of businesses and jobs that would become inaccessible by transit should these two bus lines be discontinued. Next, we provide results from a survey of bus passengers on routes 6 and 61 conducted during a seven month period from December 2017 to July 2018. We then present results of a set of semi-structured interviews of selected employers located along routes 6 and 61 conducted during the spring and summer of 2018. Finally, we provide a socioeconomic inventory of the inner-city zip code areas served by the JobLines bus routes, comparing these areas with the city of Milwaukee as a whole and with the four-county metropolitan area.

The UWM Center for Economic Development (CED) was retained as a consultant to conduct analysis of the performance of the JobLines bus routes. The Center's role is not to advocate for the continuation of these bus routes or to assemble evidence with which to make the strongest case for their continuation. Rather, our purpose is to conduct a straightforward, impartial evaluation that others may use in the decisionmaking processes that will ultimately determine the fate of the Joblines bus routes.

Background

The Zoo Interchange was originally constructed in 1963. Located at the intersection of Interstate Highways 94 and 894 and U.S. Highway 45, it is Wisconsin's busiest highway interchange. For some years prior to the reconstruction project, federal and state transportation officials had been monitoring problems with the interchange. Several issues were identified as key concerns: deteriorating pavement and bridges, deficiencies with the original design that increased the risk of accidents, and the need to accommodate growing traffic volumes. After considering several options for addressing these issues, WisDOT issued a decision in February 2012. The entire interchange would be rebuilt and its capacity expanded to better handle anticipated future traffic volumes. The cost of the project, which would be financed through a combination of federal and state funds, was estimated at \$1.71 billion.

On August 6, 2012, MICAH and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin filed a lawsuit in federal court against WisDOT and the FHWA, claiming that the Zoo Interchange project was in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) due to the agencies' failure to consider adverse effects of the project on low-income and minority populations. The principal claim was that a project of this magnitude should have included a public transit component to make suburban job locations more accessible to low-income, inner-city residents who do not have access to automobile transportation and for whom the Zoo Interchange project provides few, if any, benefits. The lawsuit argued that the main beneficiaries of the project would be suburban commuters, and that its long-term effect would be to facilitate further loss of Milwaukee businesses and residents to the suburbs.

In May 2014 a settlement to the lawsuit was announced. WisDOT and the FHWA agreed to pay \$11.5 million over a four-year period to fund new bus lines "designed to mitigate the effects of traffic congestion related to the construction of the Zoo Interchange Project within the Project Area."¹ The two agencies also agreed to pay MCTS \$2 million over the same four-year period for public outreach and marketing efforts designed to increase ridership on the new bus routes. Settlement funds were initially used to create three new bus lines—routes 6, 61, and 279. However, route 279, which served the Menomonee Falls Industrial Park, was discontinued in August 2016 due to low ridership. The termination of route 279 allowed additional funds to be invested in routes 6 and 61, improving frequency of service on those bus lines.

¹ Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) and Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin v. Mark Gottlieb et al, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin, Settlement Agreement, p. 3.

The major drawback to the settlement, from the plaintiffs' standpoint, is that the funding source for the new bus routes is temporary. Under the terms of the settlement all funds must be expended by October 1, 2018. If the JobLines routes are to continue to operate beyond 2018, a new funding source will have to be identified.

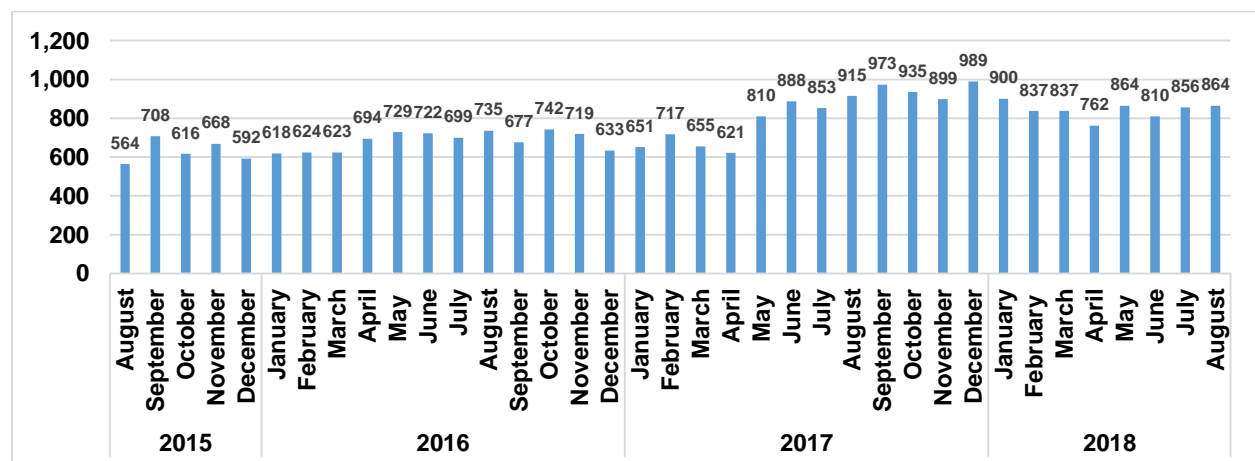
Overview of Routes 6 and 61:

The two JobLines bus routes are intended to serve residents chiefly from the following nine Milwaukee zip codes: 53205, 53206, 53208, 53209, 53210, 53212, 53216, 53218, and 53233 (see Map 1). The intent is to provide transportation for residents of these areas to job locations in suburban Milwaukee County and in Waukesha and Washington Counties, where job opportunities are considerably greater than they are in inner-city Milwaukee. Public transit is needed to connect these residents with suburban job locations because many residents either have no access to a car or do not have a valid driver's license, or both.

Route 61 begins at Capitol Drive and 35th Street, running northwest along Appleton Avenue and terminating in Germantown (see Map 1). It serves numerous retail and commercial establishments along Appleton Avenue in Waukesha County as well as the commercial district near Appleton Avenue and County Line Road in Menomonee Falls and Germantown. Key employers include Walmart, Home Depot, Target, Costco, Menards, and Kohl's.

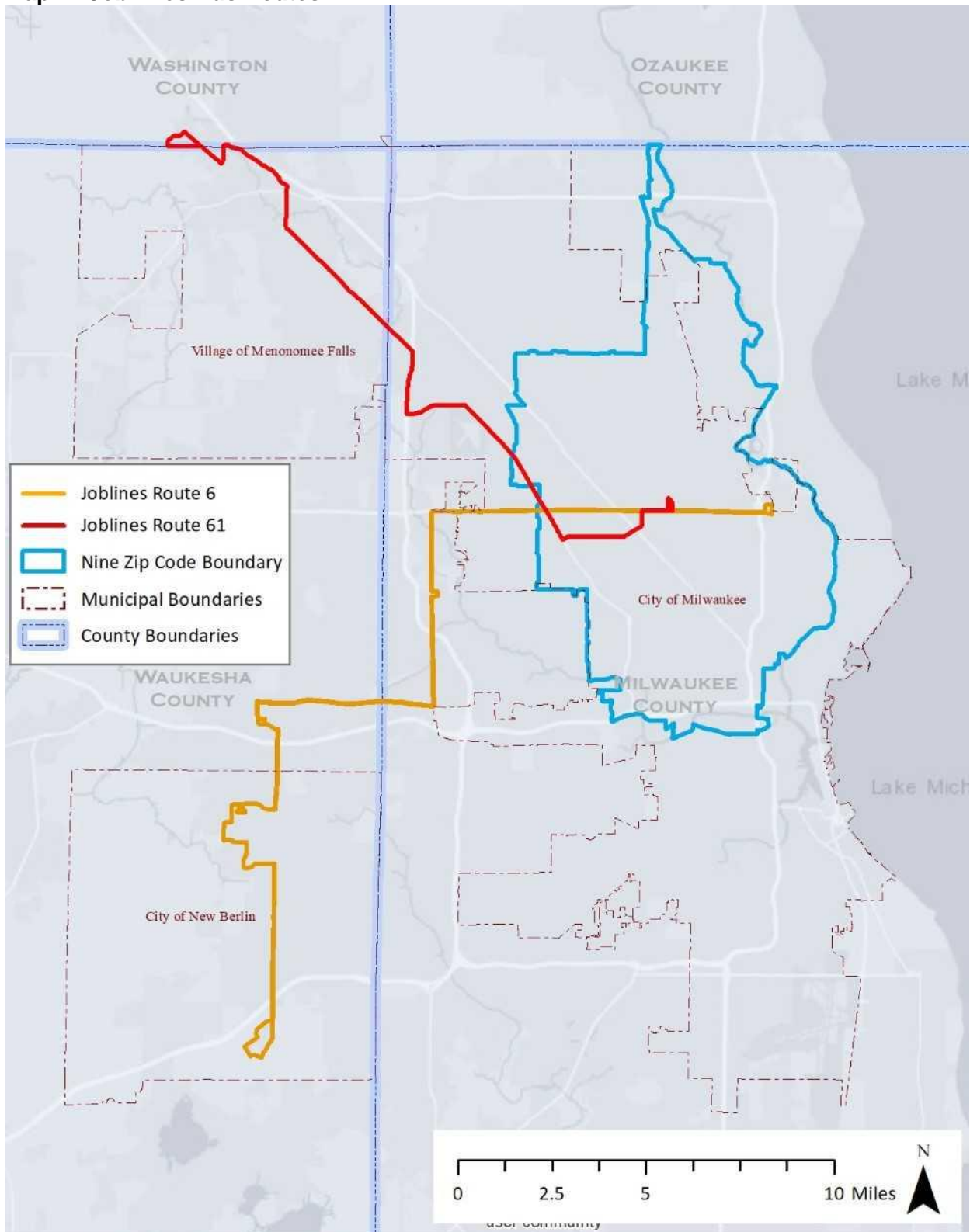
Of the two JobLines bus routes, route 61 is by far the most heavily used route. As Figure 1 shows, average weekday rides were above 800 for the most recent months for which data are available. Moreover, as Figure 1 also indicates, ridership on route 61 has been growing steadily since the new line began operation in 2015.

Figure 1. Average Weekday Ridership by Month, Route 61



Source: MCTS

Map 1. JobLines Bus Routes

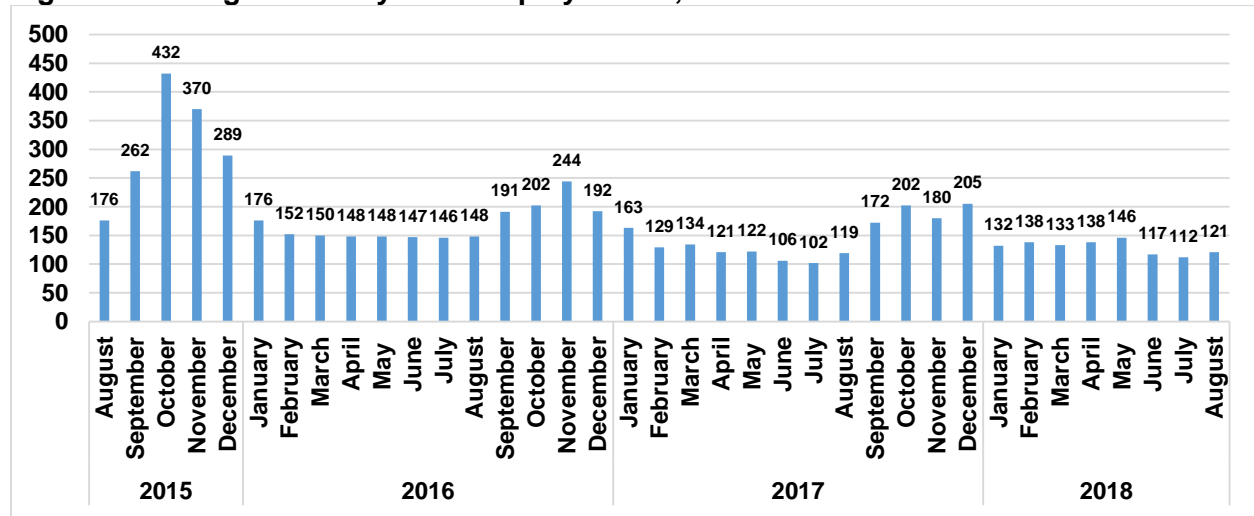


Source: ESRI's Business Analyst, Milwaukee County Transit System, and UWMCED.

Route 6 begins at Capitol Drive and Port Washington, running west along Capitol Drive to Mayfair Road and passing both Mayfair Mall and Brookfield Square before heading south along Moorland Road. The final portion of route 6 passes through the New Berlin Industrial Park before terminating at BuySeasons in New Berlin south of Interstate 43 (see Map 1). Employers along route 6 include both manufacturing and retail establishments. In addition to BuySeasons, key employers include FedEx, Quad Graphics, Dynatect, Target, and Midland Plastics.

Ridership numbers on route 6 are well below those of route 61. As Figure 2 shows, average weekday rides were in the 100-150 range for the most recent months data are available. This has been the case for much of the time the route has been operating, with the exception of several months during the fall season when ridership numbers have experienced an increase. The increased ridership at such times is likely due to the impact of temporary, seasonal employment on demand for bus travel. With the exception of these temporary spikes, which have grown smaller over time, ridership numbers on route 6 have been mostly flat.

Figure 2. Average Weekday Ridership by Month, Route 6



Source: MCTS

Study Methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the performance of the JobLines bus routes, using a combination of GIS and data analysis, survey research, and semi-structured interviews. The first section of the study uses GIS analysis to determine precisely the locations of all employers served by routes 6 and 61. We map both bus lines, along with all employers located within one-quarter-mile of a bus stop. We use one-quarter-mile because the general guideline for transit planning is that most people are willing to walk that far to get from a bus stop to their final destination.² While some people are willing to walk further than that, transit use declines significantly as distances exceed one-quarter-mile. Our goal with this portion of the study is to determine which employers would lose bus service should routes 6 and 61 be discontinued. We also determine how many jobs those employers represent.

The second portion of the study consists of a survey which was administered to riders of routes 6 and 61 during a seven-month period from December 2017 to August 2018. The survey questionnaire was relatively short, consisting of seventeen closed-ended questions that respondents were asked to answer while riding the bus. There was also a final question that requested open-ended comments on the bus route and its importance as a transportation option for the respondent.

The survey was administered as follows: CED first requested and then received permission from MCTS to place survey administrators on routes 6 and 61. Administrators boarded buses at different times and locations to increase the representativeness of the sample. After boarding the bus, administrators approached individual passengers, explained the purpose of the study, and asked them if they would be willing to complete the survey. If a passenger agreed, the administrator offered to read the survey questions aloud to the respondent. Nearly all respondents chose to have the questions read aloud to them. Administrators emphasized that participation in the study was voluntary and could be terminated at any point during the survey process. The vast majority of bus passengers (roughly 90 percent) were agreeable to participating in the study. The survey took approximately five minutes to complete. All surveys were collected from respondents before they disembarked from the bus. Altogether, 101 surveys were collected, 65 from passengers on route 61 and 36 from passengers on route 6.

² See Sean O'Sullivan and John Morrall, "Walking Distances to and from Light-Rail Transit Stations." Transportation Research Record 1538. Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC (1995): 19-26; and Fang Zhao, Lee-Fang Chow, Min-Tang Li, Albert Gan, and Ike Ubaka, "Forecasting Transit Walk Accessibility: A Regression Model Alternative to the Buffer Method." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Board, Washington, DC (2003).

The third portion of the study consists of semi-structured interviews with representatives from ten employers served by the JobLines bus routes. Sampling of employers was purposive, not random. Larger employers were favored in the sample over smaller ones, since larger businesses were presumed to be more likely than smaller ones to have at least some employees who commuted to work by bus. CED interviewers worked from an interview script, which was identical for all respondents. However, where appropriate, interviewers asked follow-up questions, allowing respondents to provide more detail. All interviews were conducted either in person or by phone. Where permission by the respondent was granted, interviews were recorded and transcribed. In other cases, detailed notes were taken. Both interview transcripts and notes of interviews were coded to identify key themes. No companies participating in the study are identified by name.

The final portion of the study uses data from the American Community Survey (ACS) of the U.S. Census Bureau to compile statistics on the nine Milwaukee zip code areas that the JobLines bus routes serve, as well as the city of Milwaukee and the four-county metro area (Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington counties). We use ACS five-year estimates, which are based on data collected between 2012-2016. The larger sample size produced through the collection of data over a five-year period increases the reliability of the sample.

Job Locations Served by Routes 6 and 61

We begin our analysis with an inventory of employers served by bus routes 6 and 61. Our purpose in this section of the study is to determine precisely which employers are presently served by either of the two bus routes, and not by any other bus route. This eliminates all employers who are located along either route 6 or 61, but are also served by another bus line that is not presently under threat of elimination. Such employers are not included in the study since the elimination of the JobLines routes would not leave them without bus service.

Table 1 includes those businesses served only by routes 6 and 61. As Table 1 shows, there are a total of 693 employers whose only bus service is provided by one of the two JobLines routes. Those establishments employ a total of 14,993 workers. As such, should the JobLines routes be discontinued, the immediate effect is that 693 Milwaukee-area employers will lose transit service, and the nearly 15,000 jobs they represent will no longer be accessible by public transportation.

Table 1. Employers by Sector, Routes 6 and 61

| Sector | Number of Businesses | Number of Employees |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Utilities | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 36 | 483 |
| Manufacturing | 61 | 2,837 |
| Wholesale Trade | 40 | 825 |
| Retail Trade | 160 | 3,737 |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 2 | 554 |
| Information | 17 | 347 |
| Finance and Insurance | 43 | 565 |
| Real Estate | 37 | 382 |
| Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services | 48 | 775 |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 16 | 583 |
| Educational Services | 12 | 108 |
| Healthcare and Social Assistance | 59 | 882 |
| Arts Entertainment Recreation | 12 | 177 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 73 | 2,202 |
| Other Services | 71 | 512 |
| Public Administration | 6 | 24 |
| TOTAL | 693 | 14,993 |

Table 1 breaks down these businesses by economic sector. The data show that the majority of jobs fall into three sectors. Roughly 60 percent of jobs are in retail, manufacturing, and accommodation and food services. All three sectors offer certain advantages for job-seeking residents of low- and moderate-income Milwaukee neighborhoods. Manufacturing jobs tend to be somewhat better compensated than service-sector jobs, particularly for those without extensive training, so jobs in manufacturing are particularly desirable. In many cases, they offer meaningful pathways out of poverty.

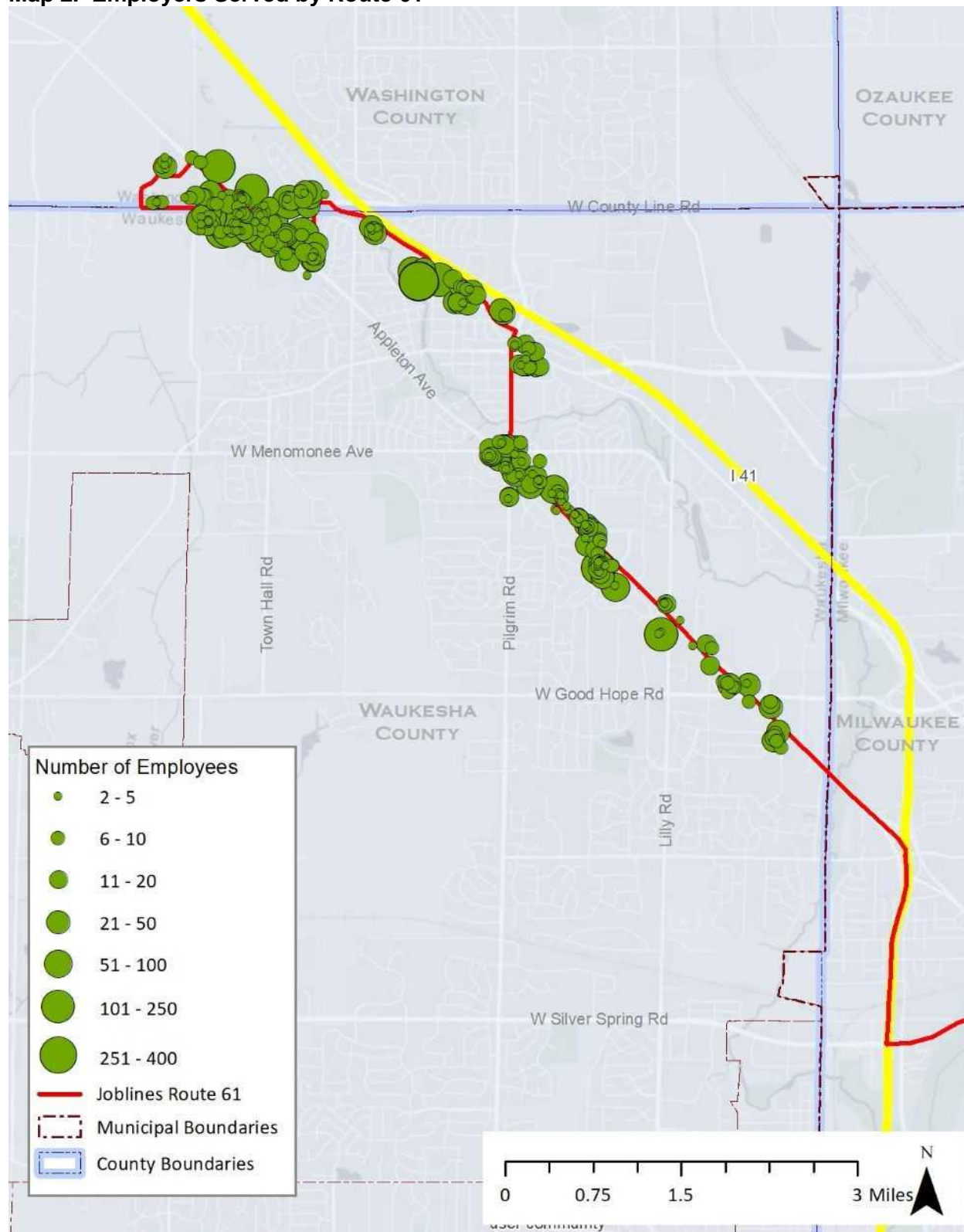
Jobs in the retail and accommodation and food services sectors may not pay as well as manufacturing, but they offer certain other advantages. Job turnover tends to be relatively high in these sectors, meaning that employers are frequently advertising positions and actively seeking workers. Competition for jobs in these sectors may thus be less fierce than it is in other sectors where turnover is lower. Such jobs may also provide entry points into the labor market for individuals, especially teenagers and young adults, who may have little to no work experience. For such individuals, even relatively short periods of employment can be useful for resume building and acquiring job references that can be used to seek more lucrative positions.

Where are the jobs located? Maps 2 and 3 show the locations of employers along routes 6 and 61, once again including only those establishments served exclusively by either of the JobLines routes. The larger dots on the maps represent larger employers. Perhaps the most noteworthy piece of information revealed in Maps 2 and 3 is that *all of the jobs and employers that would lose transit service through discontinuation of the JobLines routes are in Waukesha or Washington Counties*. All employers in Milwaukee County served by routes 6 and 61 are also served by at least one additional bus route. Since a key purpose of the JobLines routes is to connect inner-city residents with jobs in the suburbs, including Waukesha and Washington Counties, this finding is significant. Areas of the Milwaukee region with some of the strongest job growth and the largest numbers of job opportunities will no longer be accessible by transit, should the JobLines routes be discontinued. Lacking, in many cases, access to auto transportation and/or valid driver's licenses, many job-seeking residents of inner-city neighborhoods in Milwaukee will have to look elsewhere for employment opportunities.

Route 61:

We now examine each route individually, beginning with route 61. Map 2 shows the distribution of employers along route 61. As the map shows, employers are spread fairly evenly along the portion of the route located in Waukesha and Washington Counties. There is also a cluster of employers, including several large establishments, in the far northwest portion of the route near Appleton Avenue and County Line Road. Major employers in this area include Walmart, Costco, Kohl's, and Target.

Map 2. Employers Served by Route 61



Source: ESRI's Business Analyst, Milwaukee County Transit System, and UWMCED.

Map 3. Employers served by Route 6



Source: ESRI's Business Analyst, Milwaukee County Transit System, and UWMCED.

Table 2 shows employers, by economic sector, served by route 61. Again, these are only those employers who would lose bus service altogether should route 61 be discontinued. As Table 2 shows, there are 320 employers representing a total of 6,153 jobs that fall into this category. More than half of these jobs are in two economic sectors: retail and accommodation and food services. Other sectors with significant numbers of jobs include health care and social assistance, finance and insurance, and manufacturing. While manufacturing is the fifth largest employer, there are only five manufacturing establishments served by route 61.

Table 2. Employers by Sector, Route 61

| Sector | Number of Businesses | Number of Employees |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Utilities | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 10 | 228 |
| Manufacturing | 5 | 395 |
| Wholesale Trade | 3 | 19 |
| Retail Trade | 97 | 2,513 |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 0 | 0 |
| Information | 8 | 46 |
| Finance and Insurance | 24 | 405 |
| Real Estate | 22 | 274 |
| Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services | 14 | 141 |
| Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services | 5 | 43 |
| Educational Services | 8 | 97 |
| Healthcare and Social Assistance | 34 | 538 |
| Arts Entertainment Recreation | 3 | 33 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 44 | 1,173 |
| Other Services | 39 | 236 |
| Public Administration | 4 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 320 | 6,153 |

Table 3 lists the top ten employers served by route 61. Eight of these employers are retail establishments, one is manufacturing, and one is construction. The largest employer is Alto-Shaam, a manufacturer of restaurant and commercial kitchen equipment located in Menomonee Falls. With 360 employees, Alto-Shaam accounts for nearly all of the 395 manufacturing jobs served by route 61.

Table 3. Major Employers, Route 61

| Company Name | City | Employees | Sector |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|
| Alto-Shaam | Menomonee Falls | 360 | Manufacturing |
| Costco | Menomonee Falls | 228 | Retail |
| Mills Fleet Farm | Germantown | 200 | Retail |
| Walmart | Germantown | 200 | Retail |
| Blue Moon Cleaning Services Inc | Menomonee Falls | 175 | Construction |
| Kohl's | Menomonee Falls | 170 | Retail |
| Target | Menomonee Falls | 165 | Retail |
| JC Penny | Menomonee Falls | 160 | Retail |
| Pick'N Save | Menomonee Falls | 150 | Retail |
| Menards | Germantown | 140 | Retail |

Route 6:

Map 3 shows the distribution of employers along route 6. In contrast to route 61, employers are clustered in several locations along this bus route rather than spread evenly along the bus line. The biggest employment cluster is the New Berlin Industrial Park, which accounts for the significant numbers of manufacturing jobs located along route 6. Several additional jobs clusters lie to the north and south of the industrial park along Moorland Road.

Table 4 shows those employers, by economic sector, that are served only by route 6 and no other bus route. There are 373 employers representing 8,840 jobs that fall into this category. Not surprisingly given the bus line's service to the New Berlin Industrial Park, a significant number of jobs are in manufacturing; more than one-fourth of the jobs accessible only by route 6 are manufacturing jobs. Like route 61, other major sectors include retail (with 1,224 jobs) and accommodation and food services (with 1,029 jobs). Together, these three sectors account for more than half of the jobs served by route 6.

Table 4. Employers by Sector, Route 6

| Sector | Number of Businesses | Number of Employees |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Utilities | 0 | 0 |
| Construction | 26 | 255 |
| Manufacturing | 56 | 2,442 |
| Wholesale Trade | 37 | 806 |
| Retail Trade | 63 | 1,224 |
| Transportation and Warehousing | 3 | 554 |
| Information | 9 | 301 |
| Finance and Insurance | 19 | 160 |
| Real Estate | 15 | 108 |
| Professional, Scientific, and Tech Services | 33 | 634 |
| Administrative, Support and Waste Management | 11 | 540 |
| Educational Services | 4 | 11 |
| Healthcare and Social Assistance | 25 | 344 |
| Arts Entertainment Recreation | 9 | 144 |
| Accommodation and Food Services | 29 | 1,029 |
| Other Services | 32 | 276 |
| Public Administration | 2 | 12 |
| TOTAL | 373 | 8,840 |

Table 5 lists the top ten employers served by route 6. Four of the ten largest employers are in the manufacturing sector, representing a total of 736 jobs. The two largest employers, FedEx and Dynatect, are both located in the New Berlin Industrial Park. FedEx employs roughly 500 year-around workers but expands to around 1,000 workers during the peak season of November and December. Dynatect, a manufacturer of protective covers and bellows, employs 250 workers. Other sectors represented among the top ten employers include retail, accommodation and food services, wholesale trade, and information. Although not included among the ten largest employers along route 6, BuySeasons, with 125 employees, is a frequent destination for bus commuters using this route.

Table 5. Major Employers, Route 6

| Company | City | Employees | Sector |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| FedEx | New Berlin | 500 | Transportation and Warehousing |
| Dynatect | New Berlin | 250 | Manufacturing |
| Pick'n Save | New Berlin | 200 | Retail |
| Embassy Suites | Brookfield | 200 | Accommodation |
| Colotronic North America | New Berlin | 175 | Wholesale Trade |
| Quad/Graphics Inc - Glendale Drive | New Berlin | 173 | Manufacturing |
| Quad/Graphics Inc - Rogers Drive | New Berlin | 173 | Manufacturing |
| Target | New Berlin | 150 | Retail |
| Liturgical Publications Inc | New Berlin | 150 | Information |
| Sterling Gall & Jewell | New Berlin | 140 | Manufacturing |

Survey of Bus Passengers

One of the most important parts of this study is the survey of bus passengers we conducted. Altogether, 101 bus riders completed all or nearly all of the questionnaire we administered on routes 6 and 61. We received a total of sixty-five responses from riders on route 61, and thirty-six from riders on route 6. The undersampling of route 6 was deliberate. With lower ridership numbers on route 6 than route 61, a smaller sample on the former route was necessary in order to avoid skewing the results in favor of passengers on route 6. Given the size and randomness of the sample, we believe that the sample is largely representative of the overall population of riders of routes 6 and 61.

The survey findings are divided into three parts. The first part provides information on respondents, including race and ethnicity, place of residence, and reliance on public transit. The second part focuses on the employment of bus riders, including where riders work, the duration of employment, and compensation. The third part provides evidence of the importance of the JobLines bus routes in providing access to jobs. In particular, we address the question: If the JobLines routes were discontinued, how likely is it that bus riders would be able to find alternative ways of getting to their jobs?

Table 6 provides demographic information on race and ethnicity for passengers on JobLines routes 6 and 61. As might be expected given the neighborhoods that routes 6 and 61 serve, the vast majority of passengers are African American. Nearly 70 percent of bus riders identified as black. The second largest group was white, at 23 percent. No other racial or ethnic group had significant representation.

Table 6. Race/Ethnicity of Survey Respondents

| Race/Ethnicity | Total Responses | Share of total |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Black | 69 | 69.7% |
| White | 23 | 23.2% |
| Hispanic | 4 | 4.0% |
| Native American | 2 | 2.0% |
| Other | 1 | 1.0% |
| Asian | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 99 | 100.0% |

Where do the passengers traveling on routes 6 and 61 live? To preserve passenger anonymity, we did not ask respondents to provide home addresses. However, we did ask them

to identify their home zip codes. Table 7 lists all zip codes passengers identified, along with the number of passengers from each zip code. As expected, zip codes listed by the majority of respondents were among the nine designated zip codes that the JobLines routes were expected to serve. However, a significant number of passengers (22 percent of total respondents) listed zip codes that did not fall into that group. Several of these are zip codes located along routes 6 or 61 outside the central city. This suggests that suburban residents are in some cases using these bus routes to get to other destinations in the suburbs.

Table 7. Home Zip Codes of Survey Respondents

| Home Zip Code | Number of responses | Share of Total |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------|
| *53209 | 20 | 22.0% |
| *53216 | 13 | 14.3% |
| *53206 | 10 | 11.0% |
| *53210 | 9 | 9.9% |
| *53218 | 9 | 9.9% |
| *53208 | 6 | 6.6% |
| 53222 | 4 | 4.4% |
| 53225 | 4 | 4.4% |
| 53224 | 3 | 3.3% |
| 53051 | 2 | 2.2% |
| *53205 | 2 | 2.2% |
| 53151 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 53202 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 53204 | 1 | 1.1% |
| *53212 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 53214 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 53217 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 53220 | 1 | 1.1% |
| 53223 | 1 | 1.1% |
| *53233 | 1 | 1.1% |
| Total | 91 | 100.0% |

*Designated Area Zip Codes

A key objective of the survey was to determine the extent to which bus passengers are dependent on public transit to get to their destinations. The questionnaire included two items to obtain this information. First, we asked passengers whether or not they had a valid driver's license. Second, we asked them whether they had access to a car. The responses are

summarized below in Table 8. The results reveal an overwhelming dependence on public transportation by survey respondents. Only 27 percent of respondents stated that they had a valid driver's license, and only 14 percent said they had access to a car.

Table 8. Dependence on Public Transit

| | Yes | % of Total | No | % of Total |
|-------------------------------|-----|------------|----|------------|
| Valid Driver's License | 26 | 26.5 | 72 | 73.5 |
| Access to Car | 14 | 16.9 | 69 | 83.1 |

The next set of questions focused on the employment situations of respondents. First, we wanted to know the extent to which the JobLines routes were being used to commute to work. Were riders mainly using the bus lines for this purpose, or for something else? Table 9 confirms that the majority of respondents were, indeed, traveling on the bus to get to or from a job. Two-thirds of respondents were commuting to or from work. A smaller number of respondents were using the bus for shopping or for getting to or from school. Only two of 100 respondents were traveling on the bus to get to a job interview or to fill out a job application. However, this number, while small, provides some evidence that the JobLines routes are important, not just as means of transportation to and from work, but as a means of finding work in the first place. In addition, because travel to job interviews or to fill out job applications is highly sporadic, it may be that the survey results underestimate the importance of bus transportation for this purpose. As one respondent wrote in the comments section of the survey, "I would not have gotten this job without the bus line."

Table 9. Destinations of Survey Respondents

| Reason for taking bus | Total Responses | Share of Total |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| To/from work | 66 | 66.0% |
| To/from job interview/application | 2 | 2.0% |
| To/from school | 8 | 8.0% |
| Shopping | 12 | 12.0% |
| Visit friend/relative | 1 | 1.0% |
| Other | 11 | 11.0% |
| Total | 100 | 100.0% |

For those individuals using the bus to commute to and from work, we requested information about the location of jobs, length of employment, and compensation. Table 10 provides summary results for job locations. As expected, the majority of respondents were traveling to or from jobs in suburban locations, mainly Menomonee Falls, New Berlin, Brookfield, and Wauwatosa. However, a significant number (26 percent of total respondents) were commuting to or from jobs in the city of Milwaukee. These employers may in some cases be served by other bus lines, meaning that they would still be reachable by transit should the JobLines routes be discontinued. However, it may also be that service to these employers by the JobLines routes is more direct and convenient for commuters. Several respondents alluded to this in the comments section of the survey. As one respondent noted, “This bus is easy and direct. Otherwise I’d take three buses and that would take much longer.”

Table 10. Location of Employment

| Job location | Total Responses | Share of Total |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Milwaukee | 20 | 26.0% |
| Menomonee Falls | 19 | 24.7% |
| Wauwatosa | 10 | 13.0% |
| Brookfield | 10 | 13.0% |
| New Berlin | 13 | 16.9% |
| Other | 5 | 6.5% |
| Total | 77 | 100% |

We also asked respondents how long they had been working at their present jobs. In part, this was to explore the possibility that transit users who found jobs would eventually buy cars and stop commuting to work by bus. A large number of respondents reporting they had been with their present employers for relatively short periods would be consistent with this hypothesis. Table 11 provides summary results on job duration. Two-thirds of respondents had been in their current jobs for one year or less, possibly an indication that the JobLines are most important during the early months of employment when workers have not saved enough money to afford other transportation options. But the results could also reflect the high turnover among low-paying service sector positions that are heavily concentrated especially along the commercial corridors served by route 61.

Table 11. Duration of Current Job

| Duration of Current Job | Total Responses | Share of Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6 months or less | 22 | 29.7% |
| 6 months - 1 year | 27 | 36.5% |
| 1-3 years | 13 | 17.6% |
| 3+ years | 12 | 16.2% |
| Total | 74 | 100% |

How well compensated are the workers using the JobLines bus routes? Table 12 breaks down hourly pay for survey respondents. Half of those surveyed reported earning between \$10 and \$15 per hour, toward the low end of the pay scale but still well above the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. A small percentage earned more than that. Of greater concern is that 33 percent of respondents reported earning less than \$10 per hour. These individuals are, in some cases, commuting substantial distances to reach jobs that do not pay a living wage. We speculated that a higher number of commuters on route 61 would fall into this category, given the concentration of retail and food services establishments along this bus route. By contrast, we expected to observe higher wages among passengers using route 6, with its service to the New Berlin Industrial Park. However, that turned out not to be the case. Differences in compensation for workers using the two bus lines were negligible. It may be that commuters riding the bus to get to higher paying industrial jobs are especially likely to shift to auto transportation, given their higher earnings. However, it may also be that bus transportation is critical for gaining employment in the first place and commuting to work until enough earnings have been accumulated to purchase a car.

Table 12. Compensation

| Hourly pay | Total Responses | Share of Total |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Less than \$10 per hour | 21 | 33.3% |
| \$10-15 per hour | 32 | 50.8% |
| \$15-20 per hour | 6 | 9.5% |
| \$20+ per hour | 4 | 6.3% |
| Total | 63 | 100.0% |

The final set of survey questions focused on the importance of the JobLines routes to bus riders using the bus to get to or from a job. We were particularly interested in learning

whether these commuters would be able to maintain their employment if the routes were discontinued, and, if so, how they would get to work. As Table 13 shows, the most frequent answer by respondents was that they would have to quit their jobs. Nearly half of respondents selected this answer. Fifteen percent of respondents stated they would get a ride to work from a friend or co-worker, although some expressed uncertainty about how long such an arrangement might be workable. Fewer than 10 percent stated they would drive to work, not surprising given the limited access to cars among the survey population.

Table 13. Most Likely Response if Bus Line is Canceled

| If bus line cancelled... | Total Responses | Share of Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| I would drive | 7 | 9.0% |
| I would ride with someone | 12 | 15.4% |
| I would bike or walk | 3 | 3.8% |
| I would quit | 33 | 42.3% |
| Other | 23 | 29.5% |
| Total | 78 | 100.0% |

We also asked survey respondents how important the bus route was for them in finding and keeping a job. The results are shown in Table 14. Virtually all respondents stated that the bus was either somewhat or extremely important, and 87 percent reported that it was extremely important. Many of the open-ended comments we solicited at the end of the questionnaire amplified this message. As one person stated, “If you care about people you need to keep the bus. If you eliminate it, you take away jobs.” Survey administrators observed considerable anxiety among many bus passengers when they were asked how termination of the bus line would affect them. Many did not realize that the routes were established through a temporary funding source and are in danger of being discontinued.

Table 14. Importance of Bus in Finding/Maintaining Employment

| How important is bus to getting / holding this job | Total Responses | Share of Total |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| Extremely important | 64 | 86.5% |
| Somewhat important | 9 | 12.2% |
| Not very important | 0 | 0.0% |
| Not important at all | 1 | 1.4% |
| Total | 74 | 100.0% |

To summarize, passengers on bus routes 6 and 61 are, for the most part, African-American residents of low- and moderate-income areas of Milwaukee's West Side. Most are using the bus to travel to and from a job, and most are heavily reliant on public transportation to get to work, either because they have no access to a car or because they do not have a valid driver's license. Job locations for these commuters are, for the most part, in suburban communities, including Waukesha and Washington Counties. While the majority of commuters are earning above \$10 per hour, a significant number are earning less than that.

In general, the survey results indicate a strong desire by commuters on routes 6 and 61 to participate in the labor force. Many respondents are commuting long distances, spending upwards of an hour and a half on the bus each day they travel to and from work. Many are earning low wages. Still, most respondents appeared to be highly motivated to keep their positions, and many expressed alarm at the possibility that they might soon have no way to get to work.

Interviews with Employers

In addition to the survey of bus passengers, CED researchers conducted a set of interviews with employers located along bus routes 6 and 61. We used interviews rather than surveys to gather information from employers because we wanted them to provide more detailed information than could be obtained through closed-ended survey questions. We also wanted to give employers an opportunity to explain, in their own words, how their location along one of the JobLines routes has affected their business operations. In our questioning, we did not presume that the bus line provided any benefit. We simply asked them questions that would allow them to explain what, if any, benefit the bus line provided. Altogether, ten employers were interviewed over a four-month period from May-August 2018. All employers were located on portions of routes 6 or 61 that were served only by one of those two bus lines, meaning that the termination of these bus routes would leave them with no bus service.

The interview questions were focused around four key themes. The first set of questions we asked were intended to produce information about the company's workforce—where workers lived and whether or not the company had difficulties finding and keeping good workers. We expected that companies recruiting workers mainly from suburban communities would be less likely to view bus service as important, an expectation that proved to be correct. The second set of questions focused on use of the JobLines bus routes by employees. To what extent were the company's workers using the bus to get to and from work? The third set of

questions focused on the importance of the bus route to the company's business operations. Here we tried to determine how beneficial the bus line has been for each company we interviewed. Finally, the last set of questions focused on consequences of ending the bus line. How consequential would it be for the company if the bus line were discontinued?

As might be expected, the responses of companies to the questions we posed differed substantially in some cases. With respect to the residences of workers, the percentage of workers living in the city of Milwaukee varied from a high of around 70 percent at one establishment to a low of approximately 10 percent at another company. Most companies reported that roughly half of their workers live in Milwaukee.

If there was a consensus among employers on the response to any one question, it was the issue of finding and keeping good workers. Every company except one indicated that this was a significant problem, and that, if anything, it was growing more serious over time. As one respondent described, "Finding [workers] is probably one of our top business issues. We always have openings. It's frustrating." Many attributed the worker shortage to the strength of the economy and the low unemployment rate, which has placed companies in competition with one another for workers. As one respondent put it, "There's a lot of employers looking to hire people." One large retailer located along route 61 noted that entry-level positions were becoming increasingly difficult to fill. According to this respondent, "There are more people who go directly to further education out of high school. This means there are fewer who apply for these entry-level positions."

To what extent are the workers at these companies using the JobLines routes to get to and from work? The responses to this question varied somewhat. Several respondents could not answer the question. They did not know whether any of their workers rode the bus to work. Among those who did have this information, the responses varied from a high of around 25 percent of employees commuting by bus at one retail establishment located along route 61, to a low of zero employees at several other establishments. Two respondents who do not presently have employees commuting by bus reported that they had workers who originally used the bus but then eventually bought cars and now drive to work.

When asked about the importance of the bus line to their business operations, the majority of respondents indicated that the bus route was beneficial to their company. This was the case even among businesses who presently have few or no workers using the bus. A number of respondents emphasized that transit service played a key role in the recruitment of workers. One interviewee from a business located on route 6 facing chronic labor shortages reported that his company recruits at job fairs in Milwaukee. According to this individual, the

most common question asked by prospective applicants is about the availability of public transit. This company also holds open houses for prospective applicants on weekends. Many attendees use transit to get there. For this company, the importance of bus service has been growing over time. This is due partly to the fact that many employees who ride the bus serve as informal recruiters for new employees, most of whom also commute by bus.

While bus commuters at certain companies do in some cases eventually switch to auto transportation, respondents provided examples of employees for whom that has not been the case. For example, a CED researcher spoke with an individual at one company who has worked there for thirteen years. He lives in the city of Milwaukee and is disabled so he cannot drive. To get to work, he takes the Gold Line to Brookfield Square, where he transfers to JobLines route 6 to get to his workplace in the New Berlin Industrial Park. The commute one-way takes between 45-60 minutes. Every day he asks the human resources staff whether the bus line will be cancelled. He will not be able to get to work if the route is discontinued. Another employee at the same establishment, in his twelfth year with the company, has a suspended driver's license. He too anticipates loss of employment should the bus line be terminated.

When asked about the potential consequences of eliminating the bus line for the well-being of their companies, respondents provided a range of responses. Predictably, those companies which did not have workers or significant numbers of job applicants using bus transportation anticipated fewer negative consequences. By contrast, companies for which transit is more important expressed significant concerns. One respondent complained that his company has already lost some employees because of the news that bus service may be terminated soon. Fearful that they would soon have no way of getting to work, these workers proactively sought other employment options. This respondent emphasized that his company offers job opportunities to individuals who may have obstacles to employment, such as lack of access to an automobile. This individual, who represents a company that has facilities located in Wisconsin and other states, suggested that the worker shortage that would likely result from a loss of bus service might cause the company to shift some of its work to one of its facilities located in a different state.

Some interviewees made suggestions for improvements to the bus service that they believed would make the service more valuable to them. A respondent from one company located along route 6 whose workers sometimes use the bus observed that both the scheduling of the bus and the long commute times were disincentives to using the bus. As this individual put it, "For people coming from Milwaukee to get out here, it's generally an hour to an hour and a half on the bus each way... and people just aren't willing to do that. I get that, you're working

an eight and a half hour shift and then link with the bus. There's going to be some waiting, and that can pretty quickly turn into a twelve or fourteen hour day." This individual suggested the use of express buses to increase ridership. She also noted that the bus schedule did not sync with the company's shift times, suggesting that there be more engagement with employers in the scheduling of buses so that the needs of companies are better addressed.

To summarize, virtually all the employers with whom we spoke are currently facing chronic labor shortages. While our ability to generalize from our small sample of employers is limited, it appears very likely that the problem of finding and retaining good workers is a significant one for many employers located along the JobLines routes and nearby areas. While no doubt frustrating for employers, this is good news for residents of Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods seeking job opportunities. Jobs are clearly available assuming that a way can be found to get to them beyond the end of 2018, when the present funding source for the JobLines routes is depleted.

While a few employers appeared to be largely indifferent to the value of transit service to their establishments, this was the exception rather than the rule. Most employers saw transit service as an asset, either because their employees were presently using the service, or because it was a way of enlarging their pool of applicants, making their businesses accessible to job-seeking individuals who would otherwise have no way of getting to their establishments. A majority of employers took the position that the bus service should be extended beyond the end of 2018, although this preference was voiced more strongly by businesses located along route 61 than those along route 6.

Analysis of Designated Zip Code Areas

In this final section of the study, we examine a number of socioeconomic indicators to provide a picture of neighborhood well-being in the nine zip code area that the JobLines bus routes are intended to serve. Our intent, in part, is to see how this area of the city compares with the city as a whole and with the Milwaukee metro area, defined as Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington (MWOW) counties. We also provide data on several transportation indicators to make the same kinds of comparisons.

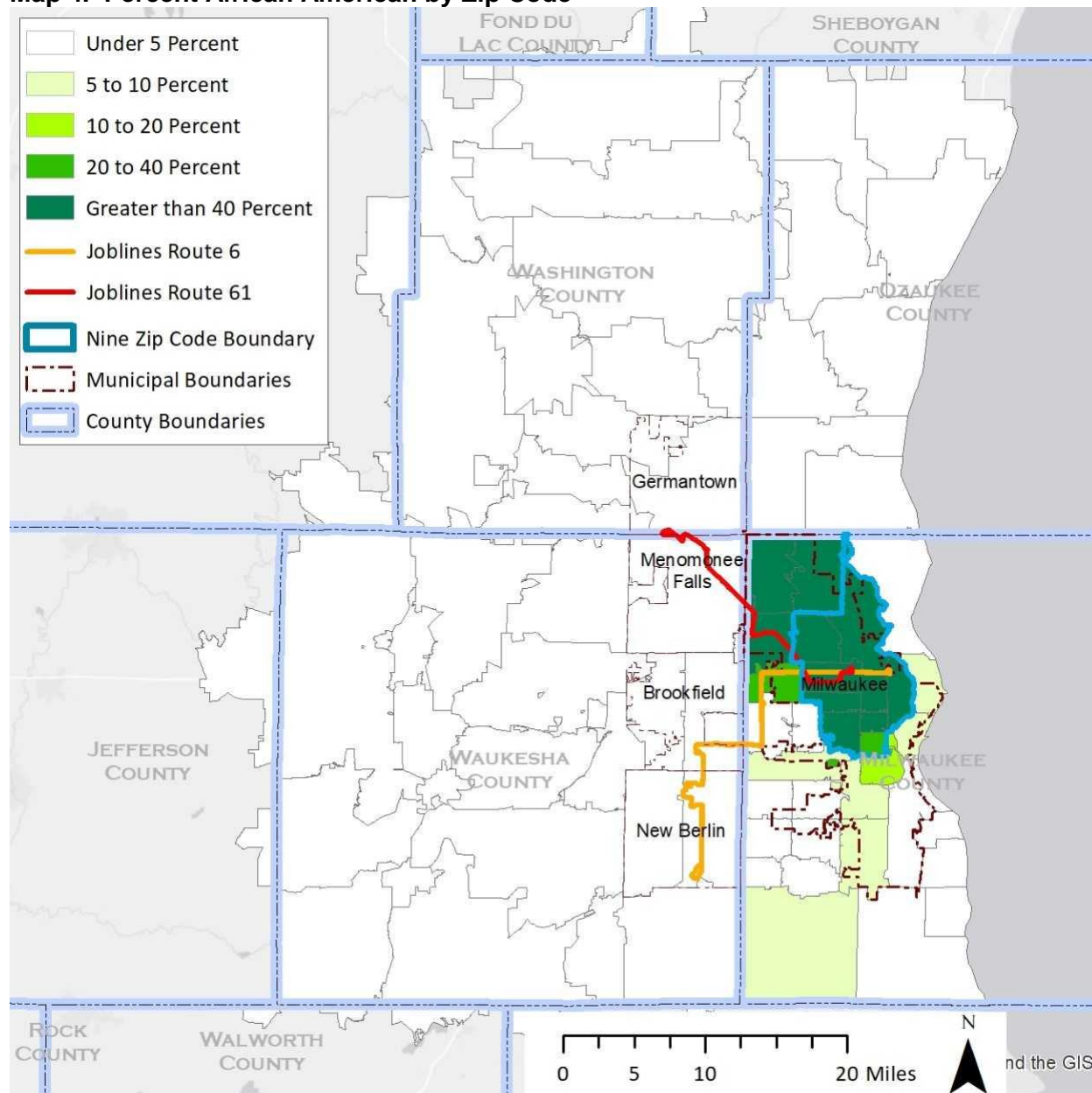
As UWM Professor Marc Levine has shown, no development has played a more significant role in the economic decline of Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods than the structural economic changes that took place between 1970 and 1990, resulting in the hemorrhaging of manufacturing jobs from the city.³ In 1970, around 40 percent of employed residents in inner-city neighborhoods worked in manufacturing. Industrial jobs provided a living wage for workers who in many cases had limited formal education, playing a key role in preserving neighborhood stability. By the 1980s, such job opportunities became increasingly scarce. The statistics tell the story. In Harambee, the number of residents employed in manufacturing fell from 4,060 in 1970 to just 765 in 2000. In Metcalfe Park, only 496 residents held manufacturing jobs in 2000, down from 2,949 in 1970.⁴ The story is similar for other inner-city neighborhoods. As manufacturing jobs disappeared during the 1980s and 1990s, poverty rates in inner-city neighborhoods soared. Increasingly, chronic joblessness became the norm, a condition that appears as entrenched today as it ever has been.

We begin by looking at some basic demographic information. Milwaukee is one of the most segregated cities in the country, and much of the city's African-American population is located within the nine zip code area. Figure 3 (p. 31) confirms what research on Milwaukee's racial patterns has consistently shown for many years now—that the vast majority of the region's African-American residents live in neighborhoods where a substantial majority of other residents are also black. Only two of the nine zip codes, 53233 and 53208, are not majority African American. The region's racial geography is further illustrated by Map 4.

³ See Marc V. Levine, *The Economic State of Milwaukee's Inner City: 1970-2000* (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Economic Development, 2002).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

Map 4. Percent African American by Zip Code



Source: 2016 5 Year American Community Survey, Milwaukee County Transit Service, and UWMCED.

How are these predominantly minority families and individuals faring? We first examine male employment rates for those aged sixteen and above. As Figure 4 below shows, employment rates for males in the nine zip code area are substantially lower than they are for the city and for the metro area. Only 54 percent of males in the designated area are employed, compared with 75 percent for the metro area and 65 percent for the city of Milwaukee. This reflects, in part, the ongoing effects of deindustrialization. For the most part, the manufacturing jobs lost during the 1980s and 1990s have not been replaced by alternative job opportunities

that are viable options for inner-city residents. The disparities are less pronounced for women. Sixty percent of women aged sixteen and above in the nine zip code area are employed, compared with 70 percent of women for the region as a whole. Map 5 shows unemployment rates for the four-county region, confirming that the areas served by the JobLines routes have the region's highest jobless rate.

Figure 3. Percent African American by Zip Code

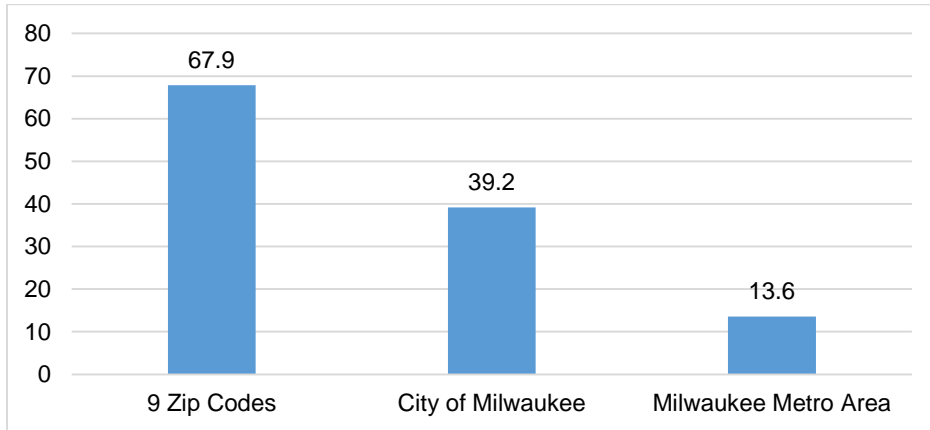
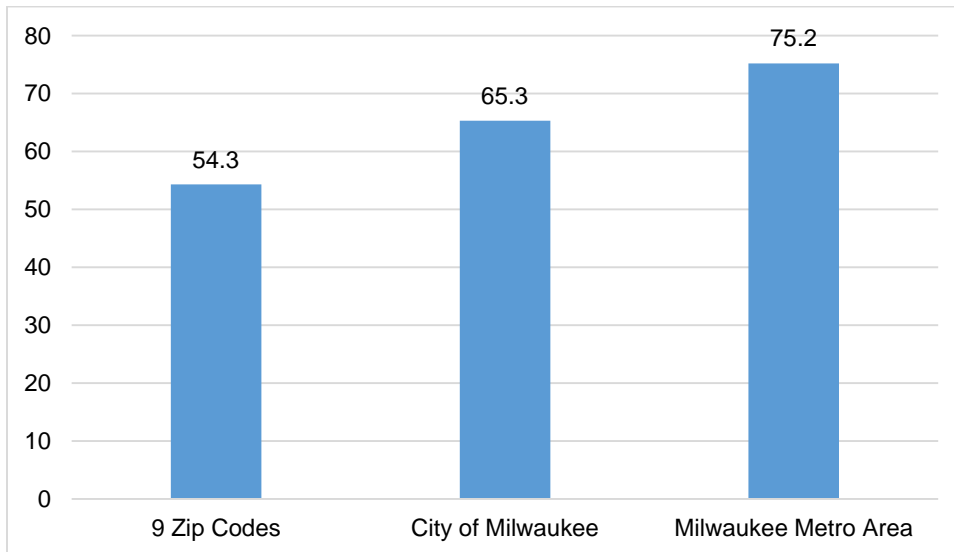
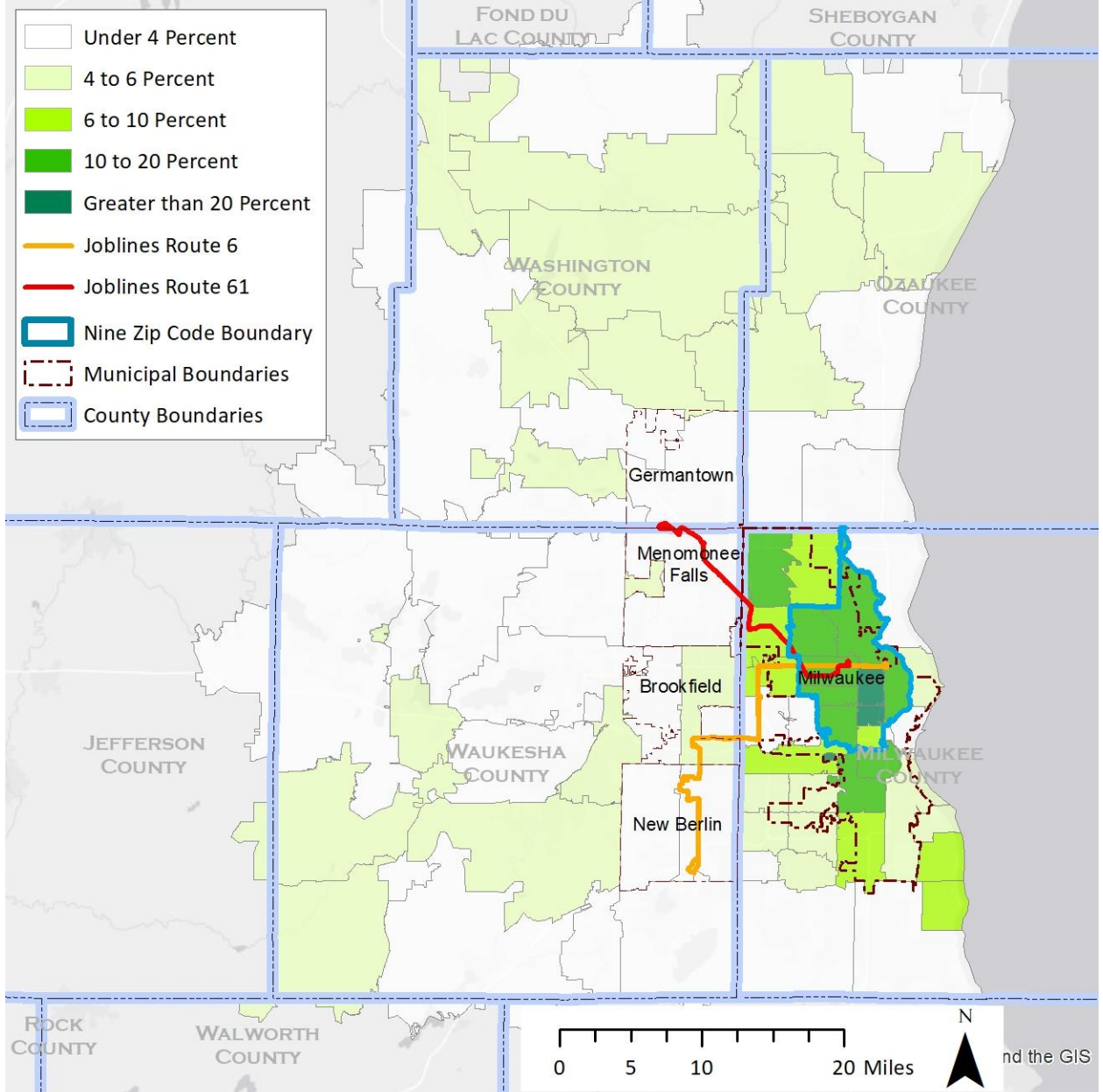


Figure 4. Male Employment Rates, Age 16-64



Map 5. Percent Unemployment by Zip Code

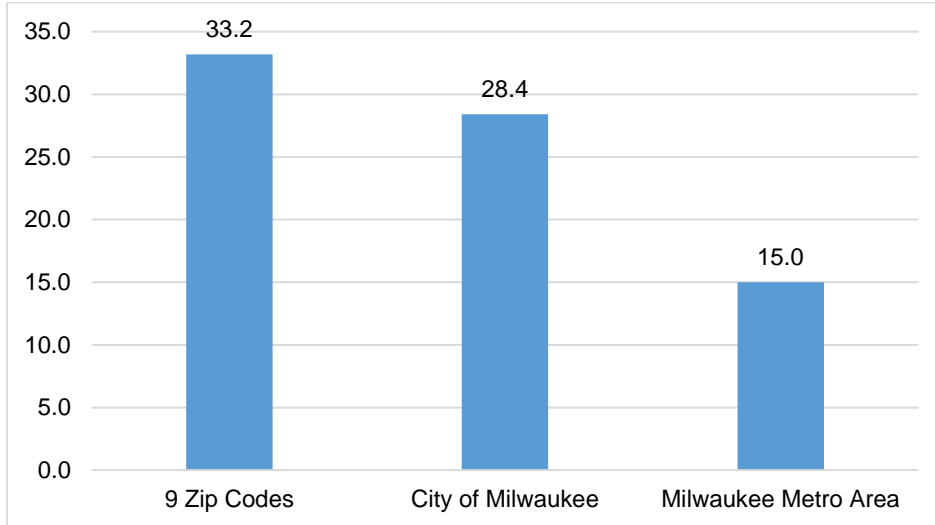


Source: 2016 5 Year American Community Survey, Milwaukee County Transit Service, and UWMCED.

Higher rates of joblessness in a given area of the city go hand-in-hand with higher poverty rates and lower household income. How high is the poverty rate and how does it compare with the city as a whole and the metropolitan area? Figure 5 below shows the percentage of persons living below the poverty line for the nine zip code area, the city of Milwaukee, and the metro area. As Figure 5 shows, one-third of all individuals living in the nine zip code area are living in poverty, more than twice the percentage for the metro area and

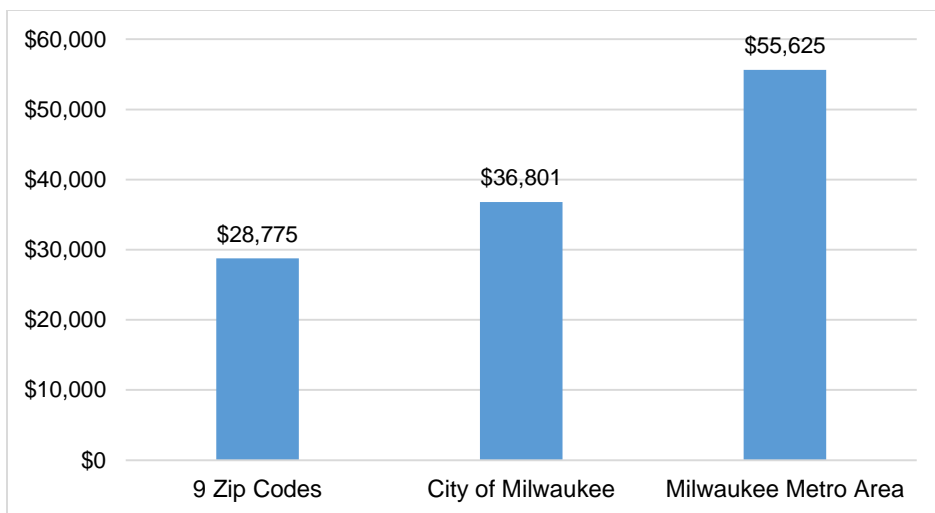
somewhat higher than the city of Milwaukee as a whole. Again, the loss of income once provided by well paying industrial jobs is partly to blame.

Figure 5. Poverty Rates

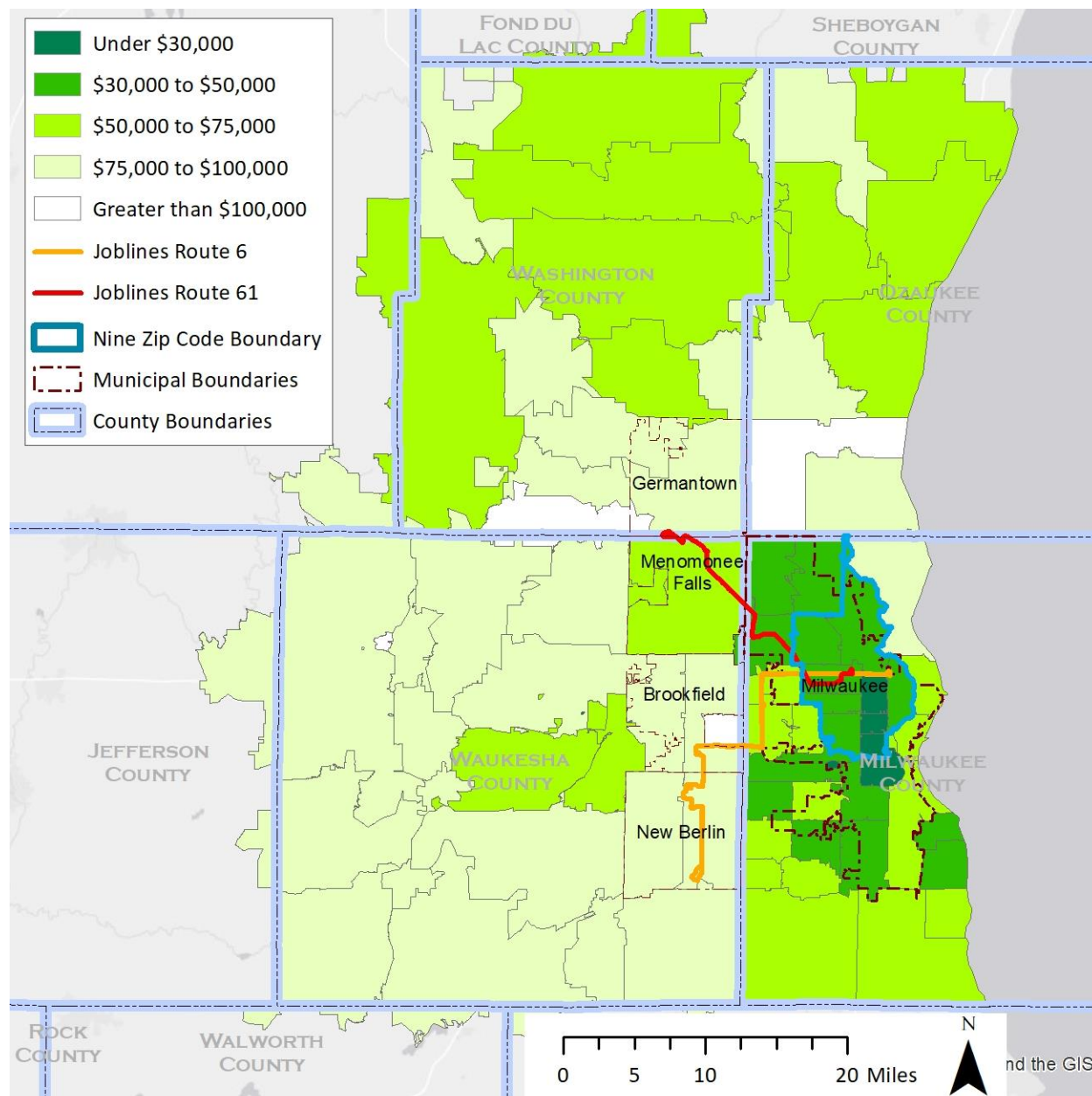


Data for household income reveals similar disparities. As Figure 6 shows, the median household income for the nine zip codes combined was just \$28,775 in 2016, just over one-half that of the metro area and well below the city of Milwaukee's median income of \$36,801. Map 6 further illustrates these disparities.

Figure 6. Median Household Income

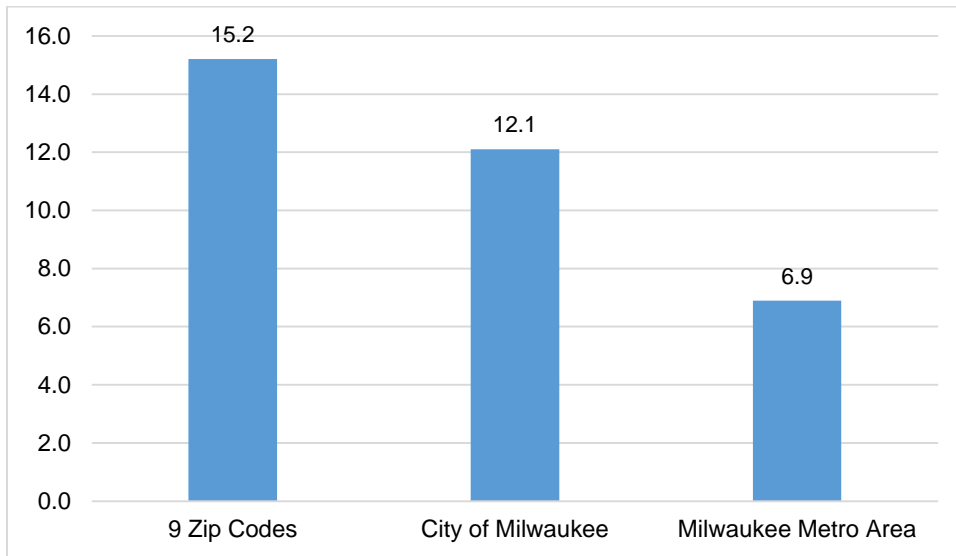


Map 6. Median Household Income by Zip Code

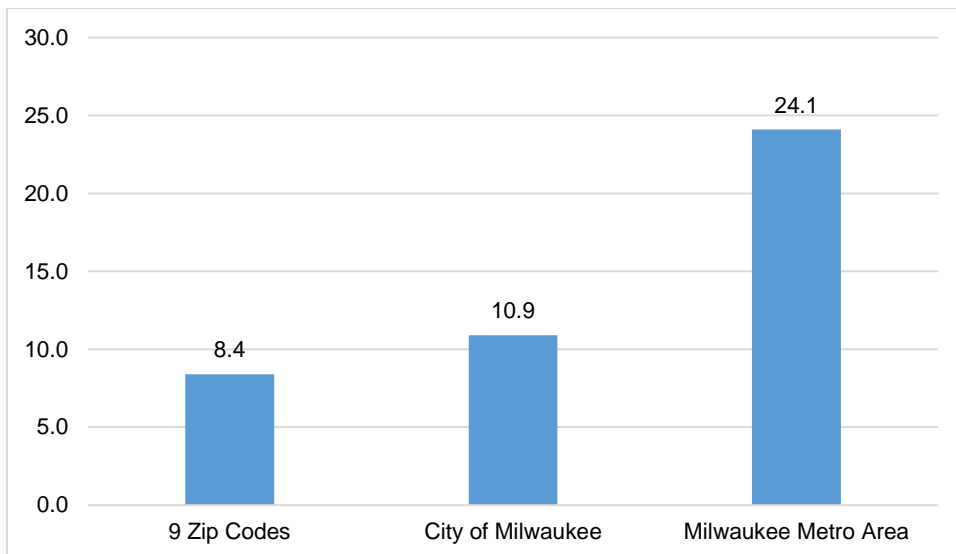


Source: 2016 5 Year American Community Survey, Milwaukee County Transit Service, and UWMCED.

Another way of measuring income disparities is to examine the percentage of households who earn above or below a certain income. Figure 7 shows the percentage of households with annual incomes below \$10,000. Fifteen percent of households in the nine zip code area fall into this category, more than twice the percentage for the metro area as a whole and somewhat higher than that of the city of Milwaukee.

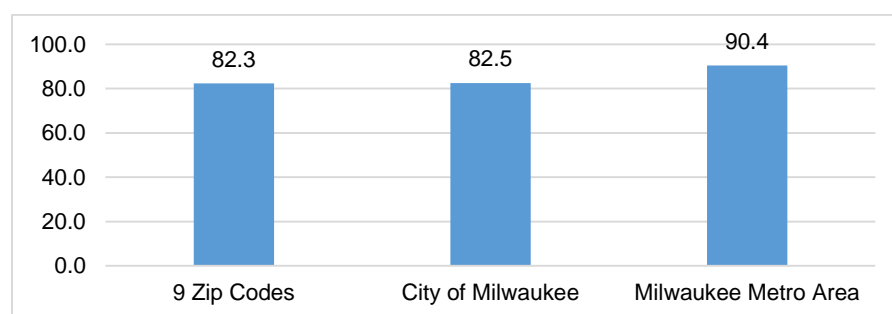
Figure 7. Percent of Households with Annual Income below \$10,000

Similar disparities are evident when examining higher income earners. Figure 8 below shows the percentage of households with annual incomes over \$100,000. Twenty-four percent of metro area households fall into this category, while less than 9 percent of households in the nine zip code area have annual incomes this high.

Figure 8. Percent of Households with Annual Income above \$100,000

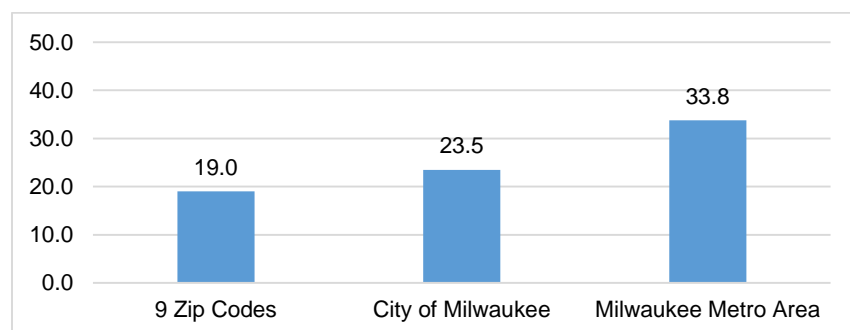
Finally, we looked at two measures of educational attainment, high school degree and college degree. These measures are important because they provide some indication of the prospects for a given population to secure both entry-level jobs as well as higher paying positions that require more training and education. We look first at the percentage of residents with at least a high school diploma or GED. As Figure 9 below indicates, the percentage is lower for the nine zip code area than for the metro area as a whole, but not by a huge amount. A substantial majority of residents of the nine zip code area have completed high school or earned a GED certificate.

Figure 9. Percent of Residents with High School/GED

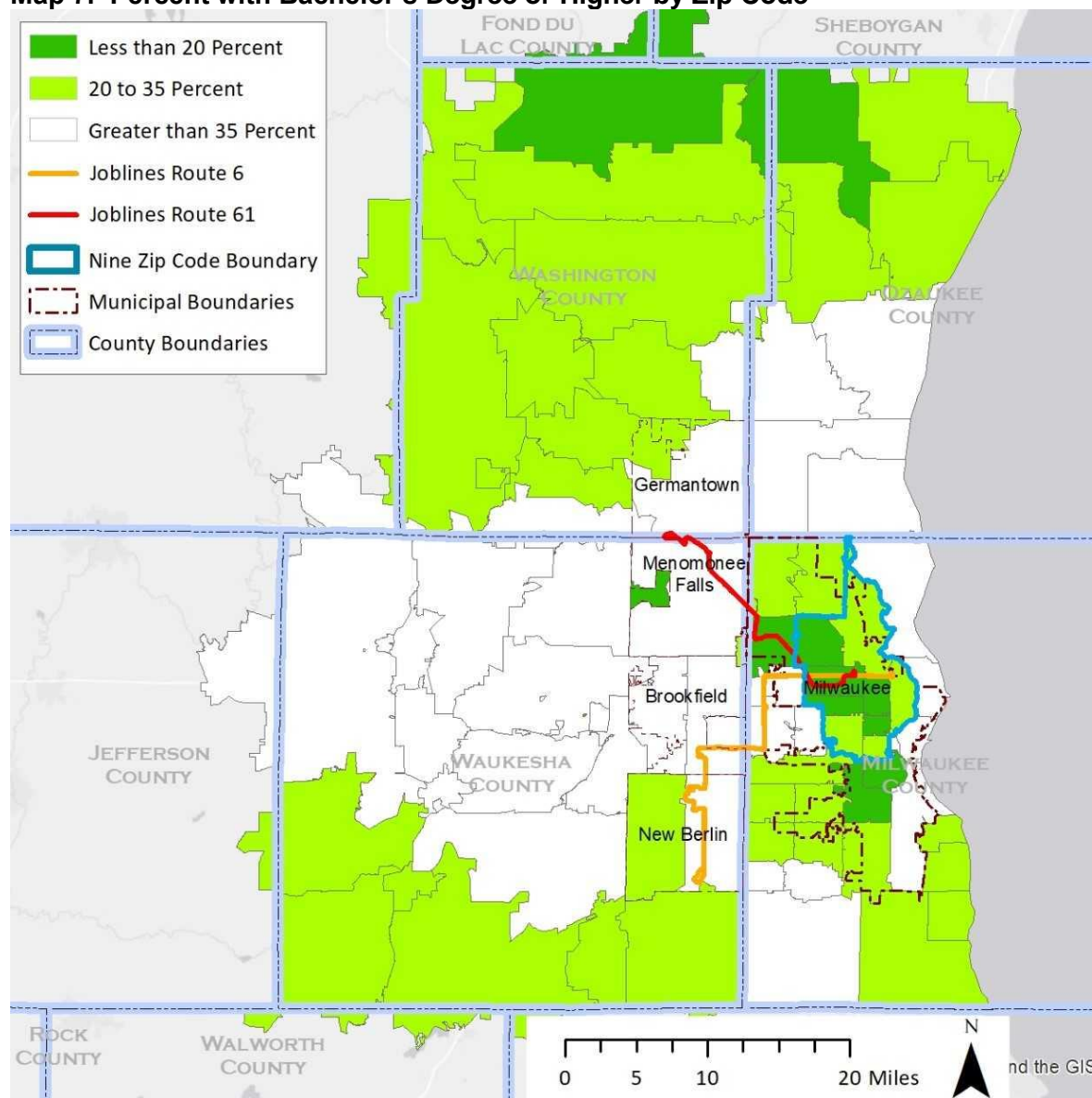


The disparities are considerably greater when considering the percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher. While 34 percent of metro area residents fall into this category, less than 20 percent of residents living in the nine zip code area do (see Figure 10). This comparison is noteworthy because of the requirement of college degrees for many middle- and upper-income occupations. A substantial majority of residents of the nine zip code area do not qualify for these kinds of positions because they do not have the academic credentials that employers require. Map 7 shows the areas of the four-county region where residents are most likely and least likely to have a college degree.

Figure 10. Percent of Residents with Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Map 7. Percent with Bachelor's Degree or Higher by Zip Code



Source: 2016 5 Year American Community Survey, Milwaukee County Transit Service, and UWMCED.

In addition to socioeconomic indicators, we also examine a number of transportation-related indicators for which data are available from the U.S. Census Bureau. We first wanted to know where the employed residents of the nine zip code areas work. Figure 11 shows that just over half of these individuals work in the nine zip code area or elsewhere in the city of Milwaukee. Another 18 percent work outside the city of Milwaukee in some other part of Milwaukee County. Just 16 percent of employed residents work in Washington, Ozaukee, or Waukesha counties, a figure no doubt heavily influenced by lack of access to auto transportation by many residents and limited bus service outside Milwaukee County.

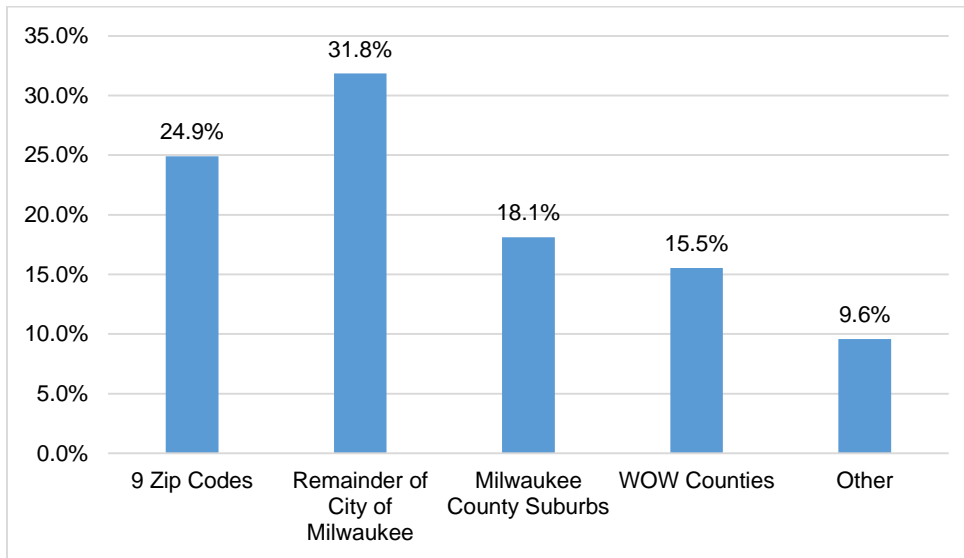
Figure 11. Where Residents Work

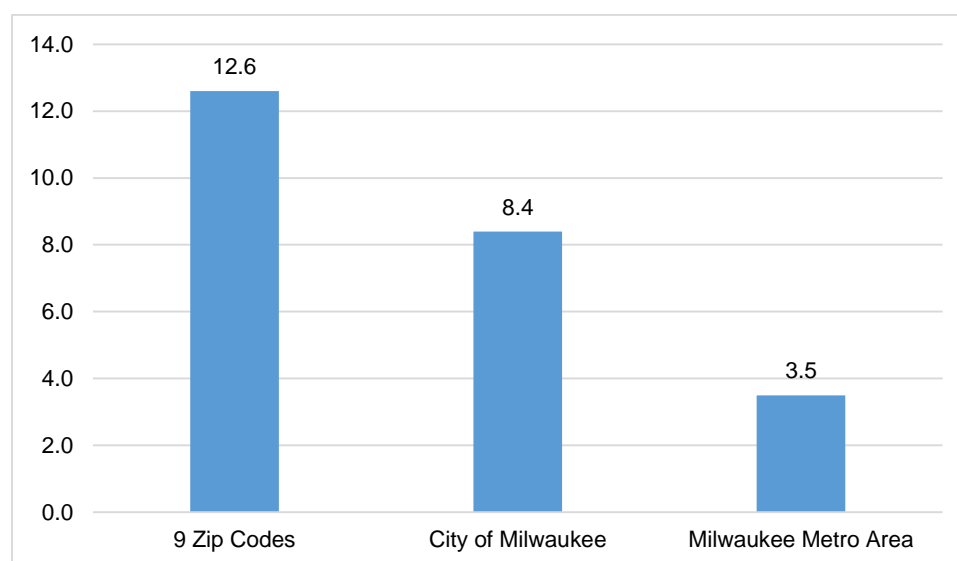
Table 15 below shows the top fifteen communities in which workers from the nine zip code area are employed. Eighty-four percent of employed residents work in one of these fifteen communities.

Table 15. Top Employment Locations for Workers from Nine Zip Code Areas

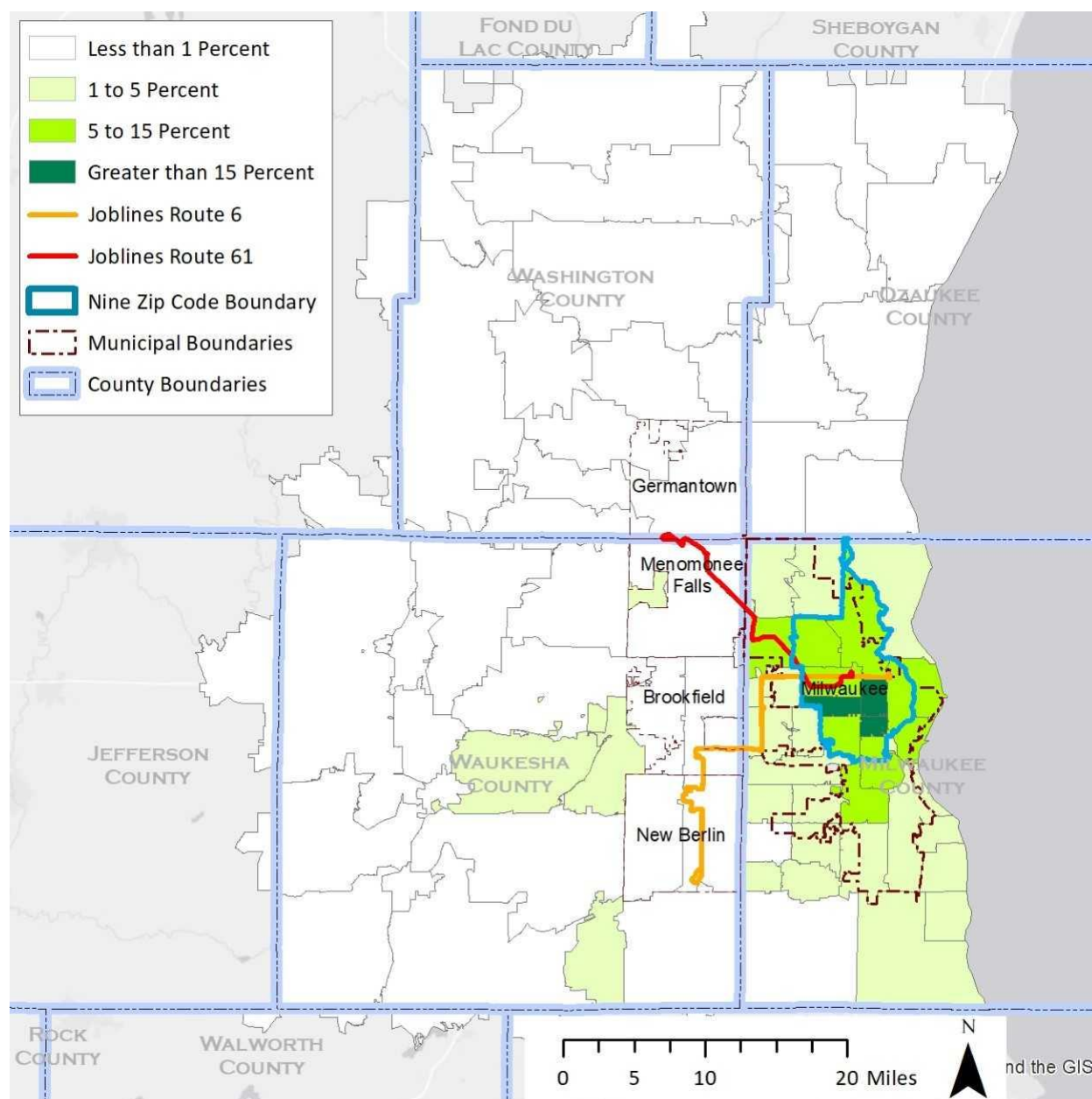
| Number of people in 9 zip code areas | 109,289 | 100.0% |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| | Job Location of workers from designated Zip Codes | Share of Jobs |
| Milwaukee city, WI | 58,400 | 53.4% |
| Wauwatosa city, WI | 8,414 | 7.7% |
| West Allis city, WI | 4,148 | 3.8% |
| Glendale city, WI | 2,985 | 2.7% |
| Brookfield city, WI | 2,889 | 2.6% |
| Menomonee Falls village, WI | 2,706 | 2.5% |
| Waukesha city, WI | 2,170 | 2.0% |
| New Berlin city, WI | 1,750 | 1.6% |
| Mequon city, WI | 1,497 | 1.4% |
| Brown Deer village, WI | 1,311 | 1.2% |
| Madison city, WI | 1,302 | 1.2% |
| Greenfield city, WI | 1,188 | 1.1% |
| Oak Creek city, WI | 971 | 0.9% |
| Germantown village, WI | 898 | 0.8% |
| Pewaukee city, WI | 815 | 0.7% |
| All other Locations | 17,845 | 16.3% |
| Total | 109,289 | 100.0% |

To what extent do these workers use public transit to get to work, as opposed to some other means of transportation, such as driving? We expected the data to show a somewhat large percentage of residents using public transportation for commuting. As Figure 12 indicates, however, only 13 percent of commuters in the nine zip code area use public transit to get to and from work. While the percentage is *comparatively* large (only 3.5 percent of metro area commuters use public transit), it still represents a small percentage of overall commuters in the nine zip code area. The vast majority of these commuters get to work in other ways besides using public transportation.

Figure 12. Percent of Workers Commuting by Transit



It might be argued that the relatively small percentage of commuters using public transit is evidence that the importance of public transportation for inner-city residents, especially commuters, has been exaggerated. However, it may also be that many of these workers relied on public transit to secure employment in the first place, and then purchased cars only after working for a period of time and accumulating some savings. As we have shown, a large percentage of residents of the nine zip code area are unemployed, and it may well be that public transit is crucial to the employment prospects of many of these individuals. As Map 8 shows, public transit is more heavily used by residents of Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods than by any other population in the four-county region. And as our survey of the JobLines bus riders indicates, the vast majority of commuters using these bus routes are dependent on public transit to get to and from work.

Map 8. Public Transit Use by Zip Code

Source: 2016 5 Year American Community Survey, Milwaukee County Transit Service, and UWMCED.

In sum, our research seems to confirm a classic “spatial mismatch” situation in which the locations of available jobs fail to align with the places where many jobless residents live. As our employer interviews suggest, areas of the region outside Milwaukee County appear to be experiencing significant worker shortages. Unemployed residents of Milwaukee’s inner city could fill some of those positions—indeed, as a result of the JobLines bus routes, some positions are being filled in this way—but transportation linkages between suburban jobs and

inner-city residents are weak. The JobLines bus routes provide very limited service to these suburban areas, and even that service is now threatened. Job openings in the WOW county suburbs are one possible opportunity to address high rates of poverty and joblessness in Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods, but taking advantage of this opportunity will require meaningful steps to address the transportation problem for those Milwaukee residents who do not have access to automobiles.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine how effectively the JobLines bus routes have performed in connecting residents of Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods with job locations in suburban areas, especially in Waukesha and Washington Counties. Our findings indicate that routes 6 and 61 are highly valued by bus passengers, most of whom are commuting to and from a job. These individuals are heavily dependent on public transit, and many expect to lose their employment should the bus lines be discontinued. Many of those we surveyed expressed a strong preference to remain in the labor force. Many were enduring long commute times to get to low-paying jobs. Still, they were highly motivated to work.

Our analysis found that roughly 700 Milwaukee-area employers will lose bus service should routes 6 and 61 be discontinued. Those employers represent a total of 15,000 jobs. Virtually all the employers with whom we spoke were facing labor shortages, and most viewed transit service as an advantage in addressing the shortage of workers. Still, when asked about the direct benefits of transit service to their businesses, the responses were mixed. Some companies stated that transit was essential, predicting dire consequences should the bus lines be discontinued. Other employers were more equivocal, especially those which had no workers presently commuting by transit. In general, employers located along route 61 expressed stronger support for transit than those along route 6.

The JobLines were originally established to mitigate transportation problems that were expected to arise in connection with the Zoo Interchange reconstruction project. Under the terms of the 2014 Settlement Agreement, there was no expectation that the bus service would be maintained beyond 2018, when construction was expected to be complete. Yet the analysis here indicates there is a need for permanent transit connections between inner-city Milwaukee neighborhoods and job locations in suburban areas. Better transit could address two key problems the region is currently facing: the high jobless rates of Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods and the shortage of workers faced by many suburban employers.

Our analysis suggests that the JobLines bus routes are playing a role in addressing these problems, but that steps might be taken to help them do so more effectively. We offer the following recommendations:

Should the decision be made to continue service beyond 2018, we recommend that careful consideration be given to the configuration of these routes, especially route 6, to be sure that the buses serve those locations where the greatest number of passengers want to go. In some cases, it may be possible to shorten bus routes while disadvantaging few if any passengers, lessening commute times to more heavily visited destinations.

We also recommend careful consultation with employers in any reconfiguration and rescheduling of bus routes, so that information about shift times and demand for bus service is incorporated into decisionmaking processes. This information could be obtained through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or some combination of the three. The relatively low ridership numbers on route 6 suggest that more meaningful coordination with employers will be especially crucial if this bus line is to remain viable.

Finally, we recommend consideration of these routes for incorporation into plans for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) that would provide quicker and more direct transit service between the city of Milwaukee and surrounding suburbs. We urge that plans for BRT prioritize the need to connect low-income residents of Milwaukee's inner city—including the nine zip code area designated in this study—with employers in Waukesha, Washington, and Ozaukee Counties. Certain areas presently served by routes 6 and 61 might be more efficiently served by BRT.

This study has identified a pressing need for transit service between Milwaukee's inner-city neighborhoods and suburban areas outside Milwaukee County. Whether that need is met through the continuation of the JobLines bus routes beyond 2018 or in some other way, it is an issue that requires attention. The region will not prosper as long as large areas of Milwaukee remain impoverished, cut off from areas where job growth is occurring. And employers outside Milwaukee County will continue to face significant worker shortages if ways are not found to connect job-seeking Milwaukee residents with the positions these businesses seek to fill.