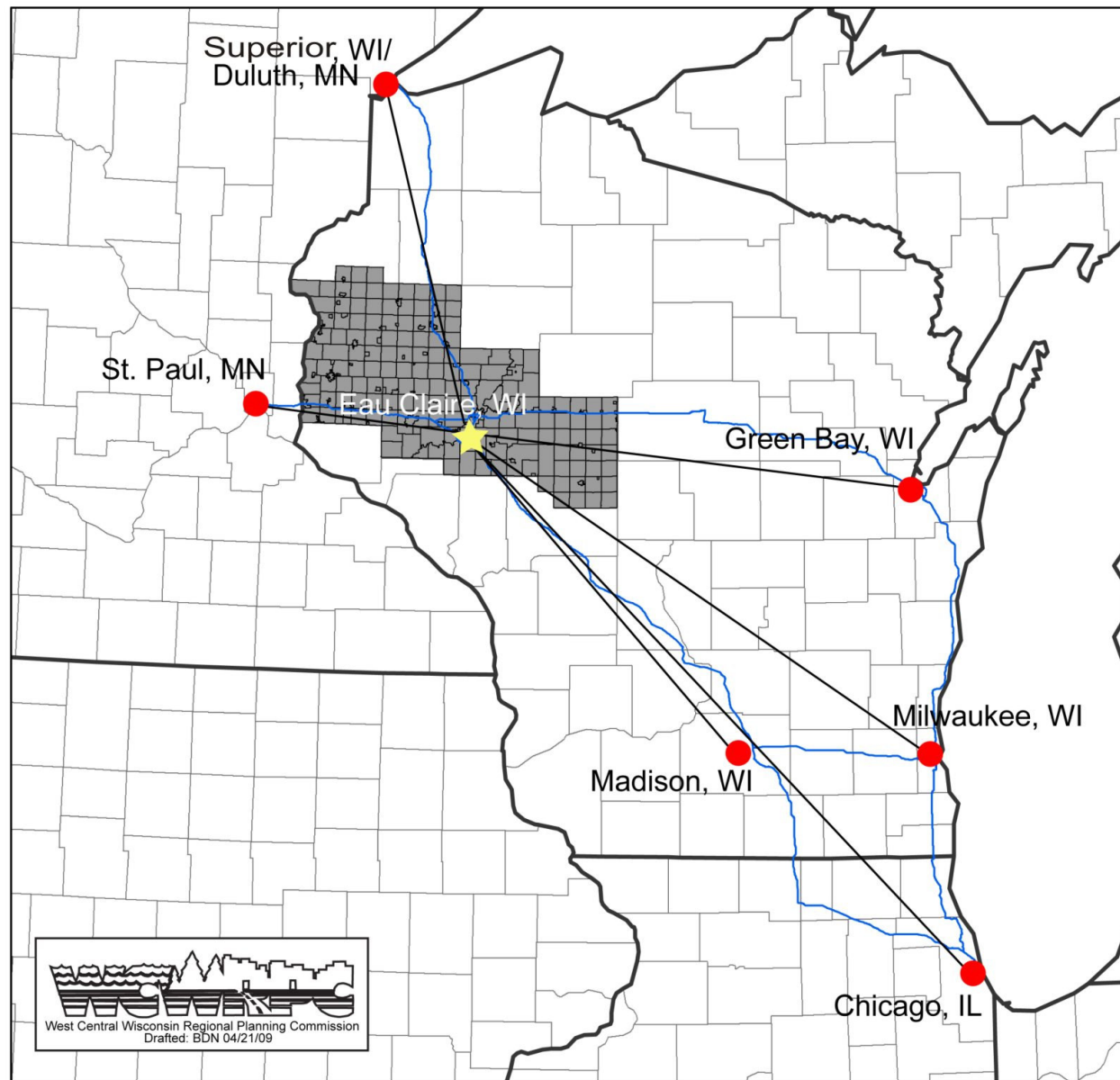


## Travel Times to Major Cities from Eau Claire, WI



### Driving Time

St. Paul, MN	.....	1.5 hours
Duluth, MN	.....	2.5 hours
Madison, WI	.....	3 hours
Green Bay	.....	3 hours
Milwaukee, WI	.....	4 hours
Chicago, IL	.....	5.25 hours

### Flying Time\*

Los Angeles, CA	.....	7 hours
New York, NY	.....	5.5 hours

\* includes 1.5 hour drive to MSP airport and arrival 1.5 hours before flight departure

Several of the previous maps have shown data regarding population density and locations, commuting patterns, flow of dollars, agriculture changes, and industry clusters. A significant reason for these conditions is transportation infrastructure and the time it takes to travel. Two different arguments regarding development and transportation are: transportation facilities drive development, and, development drives the need for transportation facilities. Regardless of either argument, our region is an interesting case study in how we travel and where we can travel.

Many say that one reason our region is desirable is the proximity to places like the Twin Cities and the Northwoods. When looking at economic development, community desirability, and overall quality of life, an important aspect is how well a community is physically connected to places like recreation areas, a major metropolitan area (Twin Cities), a global city (Chicago), and the world as a whole. During discussion of this topic, two questions often surface. First, how are we connected? Second, how well are we connected?

To answer the first question, we are primarily connected via automobile. While there has been discussion of passenger rail traveling through our region in the future, this service does not exist. If one was to leave from Eau Claire, they would be in the Twin Cities in 1½ hours, Madison in three hours, and Chicago in roughly five hours. Obviously, certain areas of our region have longer or shorter travel times to these locations. Another means by which we are connected is through air travel. Minneapolis - St. Paul Airport allows access to the nation and the world. It is interesting to note that from Eau Claire, one could be in New York City in about the same amount of time as it would take to drive to Chicago. If one lives in the western portion of the region, it would easily take less time to travel to New York City than to Chicago or Milwaukee.

In regards to how well we are connected, there are many opinions, and often it depends on who is answering the question and where one wants to travel. With the theory of the “death of distance”, in that due to existing communication technology, proximity to work and/or clients is less important, it is easier to live, work, and have clients in different places. In regards to industry and economic development, the old adage “time is money” is important in this discussion. It is significantly more difficult to be efficient while driving, as opposed to riding on a bus or in a train, where it is easier to work. As our communities and region try to compete, many agree that it is paramount that transportation options beyond a personal vehicle exist. With the addition of service to Chicago O’Hare Airport from the Chippewa Valley Airport in 2010, Chicago conditions will improve. Conversely, our general location on the I-94 route between the Twin Cities and the southern part of the state can be viewed as a positive attribute.