

Preliminary Draft

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 279
MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Chapter VII

**RECOMMENDED TRANSIT
SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the comments received on the preliminary recommended plan, the response of the staff and Advisory Committee to the comments received, and the final recommended transit development plan for the Milwaukee County Transit System. The final plan is a short-range plan, outlining the recommended improvement and expansion of the transit system proposed to occur over a period of about five years. The final plan proposes improvements to the year 2010 transit system that would result in about a 22 percent expansion of transit service. The plan may be considered an initial stage in the implementation of the transit element of the regional transportation plan which proposes a doubling of transit service in southeastern Wisconsin over the next 25 years. Implementing this recommended short-range transit plan, as well as the long-range transit plan, will require dedicated local transit funding.

The transit system's immediate need for dedicated local funding has been identified several times during the course of this transit study including in the existing system evaluation presented in Chapter V, in the alternative service plans presented in Chapter VI, and in the materials presented at the public informational meetings for the plan held in January 2007 and January 2009. These chapters and materials demonstrate that Milwaukee County can no longer rely on the local property tax levy to fund the system. In the absence of dedicated funding, a continued reduction in transit service combined with substantial increases in transit fares may be expected. A potential need for significant reduction of transit services—25 to 35 percent—is possible within the next few years when the next set of buses needs to be replaced.

Since the January 2009 public informational meetings, Commission staff has worked with Milwaukee County staff, the former Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority, the current Southeastern Regional Transit Authority, and numerous groups and organizations, to secure passage of State legislation authorizing a permanent source of dedicated funding for public transit in southeastern Wisconsin. In anticipation of dedicated funding being provided to Milwaukee County, Commission staff postponed completion of this transit study for the Milwaukee County Transit System as this would require development of an implementation schedule for the plan recommendations. However, dedicated funding failed to be approved during preparation of the 2009-2011 State budget in June 2009, and in April 2010 during the regular session of the Legislature.

The final recommended Milwaukee County transit system development plan documented in this chapter would require that State legislation providing dedicated funding for transit in Milwaukee County be enacted, and the plan outlines the desirable improvement and expansion of transit service which could be implemented upon approval of dedicated funding. The earliest this may occur would probably be as part of the State 2011-2013 budget legislation. With allowance for the time needed for the State to administer sales tax collections, this means that implementation could at the earliest begin in 2012. The recommended transit system development plan proposes that service improvement and expansion would be staged to occur over a subsequent five year period.

This chapter includes a description of the route and service changes recommended under the final plan and the anticipated performance of the recommended transit system, including information on projected ridership, revenues, operating and capital costs, and the need for dedicated funding for the transit system. The actions required to achieve plan implementation are also identified. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

COMMENTS ON THE ALTERNATIVE IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Between late January and mid March 2009, Commission staff solicited public feedback on the alternative transit service improvement plans identified in the previous chapter. Information summarizing the alternative improvement plans was also provided through a widely distributed newsletter and at three public informational meetings. In addition, several newspapers published articles focusing on the proposed service improvements and the need for dedicated public funding for the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS). In total, 159 comments were submitted at public meetings and via letter, email, or through the Commission website with the majority of the comments being supportive toward the transit

system. All public comments were reviewed and summarized by staff at the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and included in a record of public comments provided for review to each member of the study advisory committee.¹ The public comments were used in selecting the transit service improvements included in the final recommended plan.

Comments related to the Transit System In General

A total of 57 of the 159 comments received pertained to general transit system issues and did not specifically address the transit system development plan or the alternative transit service improvement plans:

- 20 people expressed support for the MCTS or public transit in general.
- Five people stated their opposition to the service reductions made on the system since the year 2000 and the amount of transit service that had been lost.

Response

The proposed service improvements under both Alternative Improvement Plans 1 and 2 would restore many of the service cuts implemented by the transit system since the year 2000 plus add service for new express routes, local route extensions, improved service frequencies, and longer service hours. Under Alternatives 1 and 2, the system would operate about 1.63 million and 1.54 million annual bus hours of service, respectively, with service levels under Alternative 1 being only about one percent below the 1.65 million bus hours provided by the transit system in the year 2000.

- The comments of 22 people addressed various issues with transit system equipment and facilities, bus operators, or passengers. These comments identified concerns and complaints on overcrowded buses; bus stop locations; snow removal at bus stops; bus operators failing to announce bus stops; poor attitudes of some bus operators; the use of profane language by passengers; unclean buses; and the safety and security of passengers and bus operators.
- 10 people offered suggestions for revising and improving the marketing and public relations efforts undertaken by the transit system.

¹See *Record of Public Comments, Milwaukee County Transit System Development Plan, Volume Two: Alternative Improvement Plans, Comments Received January 9 through March 16, 2009; April 2009.*

Response

The specific comments and suggestions regarding transit system equipment and facilities, bus operators, passengers, and transit system marketing and public relations efforts fall outside the scope of the transit development plan being prepared by the Regional Planning Commission and were provided directly to transit system staff responsible for responding to customer service issues and marketing. Customer service and marketing are key to the mission of the Milwaukee County Transit System to provide reliable, convenient and safe public transportation services, and transit system staff will work to resolve the issues identified by these comments. In addition, criteria regarding bus stop announcements, bus stop locations and bus stop accessibility—including snow removal—are identified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and transit system staff strives to maintain and improve transit system compliance with all ADA requirements. By way of example, the transit system continues to focus on the bus operator's responsibility for making bus stop announcements, and anticipates implementing an automated bus stop announcement system in 2011. In 2009 and 2010, the transit system embarked on a process of improving accessibility at many bus stops throughout the system by adding passenger loading and unloading pads to improve universal access to the bus. Without these concrete pads, it was not feasible for wheelchair users and others with disabilities to make use of the accessible fixed route transit service provided on bus routes.

Comments Specific to Format of and Materials for January 2009 Public Informational Meetings

A total of 12 comments were received that addressed the public informational meetings and materials.

- Three comments concerned the scheduling, location, or format of the public informational meetings held for the plan. These included: one comment suggesting that meeting locations should have been selected that were better served by the MCTS; one objecting to the open house format of the meeting rather than a public hearing format with formal testimony; and one objecting to scheduling the meetings during the week of the Presidential inauguration.

Response

It is a Commission policy to hold public meetings like the informational meetings for the MCTS at transit accessible locations. The downtown Transit Center is directly served by five transit system local routes-- Nos. 10, 12, 14, 23, and 31--and is within two blocks of

a sixth route--Route No. 30. Together, these six route account for about one-third of the total passengers carried on the transit system on an average weekday. The Washington Park Senior Center is directly served by Route No. 31 and within one-quarter mile of Route No. 30. The West Allis City Hall is directly served by Route No. 18 and within one-quarter mile of Route Nos. 54 and 76.

The open house format for public meetings is an effective way to facilitate the review of study findings and recommendations, and for staff to be accessible to the public. Staff from the Commission, Milwaukee County, and the transit system staff were present at the meetings to discuss with, and answer questions on, printed materials and display boards providing information about the transit system development plan and improvement alternatives. Several members of the Advisory Committee for the study were also present. The public could also provide formal statements and testimony to a court reporter available at each meeting.

The public informational meetings were scheduled for early evening and were completed by 7:00 p.m. so those attending on the evening of the January 21, 2009, could watch the televised Presidential inauguration events, or participate in local events for the inauguration.

- Nine comments addressed the information distributed for the meetings on the alternative improvement plans and funding options. One of these comments stated that not enough information had been provided on how the transit system should be funded.

Response

The materials for the alternative improvement plans described two proposals for dedicated transit funding that had been advanced by public officials during the development of the plans. One proposed that the growth in the existing sales tax collected on vehicle-related purchases be diverted from the State general fund and used for funding transit. It was concluded that this funding source was not likely to be viable. The other proposal was to levy a 0.5 percent additional local sales tax for transit. The Commission concluded in the 2035 regional transportation system plan that a sales tax would be a necessary funding source to maintain and improve and expand transit service in southeastern Wisconsin. In November of 2008, an advisory referendum held in

Milwaukee County passed approving a one percent county sales tax increase, which included an anticipated 0.5 percent sales tax for transit. Also in November of 2008, the former “temporary” and “limited authority” Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority recommended that authority be given by the Wisconsin Legislature to enact up to a 0.5 percent sales tax for transit systems in southeastern Wisconsin. In the spring of 2009, Wisconsin Governor James Doyle proposed legislation during the preparation of the 2009-2011 State budget that would have created a regional transit authority in southeastern Wisconsin, with the authority to enact up to a 0.5 percent sales tax for transit. The State Legislature rejected the Governor’s proposal, and proposed legislation for a Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail authority and for a Milwaukee County transit authority. Governor Doyle vetoed the Milwaukee County transit authority, which would have permitted a 0.5 percent sales tax. In April of 2010, another attempt to pass State legislation to create a regional transit authority in southeastern Wisconsin was made, but the legislation was not passed by the State Legislature.

Comments Specific to the Alternative Transit Service Improvement Plans

A total of 90 comments were received on the transit service changes and improvements proposed under the alternative plans. These comments can be summarized as follows:

- 31 comments expressed support for the improvement alternatives or specific service changes. The majority of these comments were in favor of the proposed new local routes and route extensions, the addition of express or bus rapid transit (BRT) routes, increases in service frequencies, and expanded service hours.
- 35 comments suggesting additional routing and/or service changes or changes to fares and operating policies which were not included in the improvement alternatives including:
 - 12 comments identifying/requesting changes for local bus routes including:
 - Reestablish Route No. 11 service over Vliet Street (two comments);
 - Change Route No. 18 to make the route branches more understandable to riders (one comment);
 - Extend Route No. 28 to provide service to the Village of Hales Corners and to Boerner Gardens in Whitnall Park (three comments);
 - Improve weekend service on Route No. 57 (one comment);

- Extend service hours on the system on Fridays and Saturday nights, potentially until 3:00 or 3:30 a.m. with Route No. 10 specifically identified as needing longer weekend service hours (two comments); and
- In designing routing changes, keep route lengths and running times to what operators can do without "cutting corners" (one comment).

Response

The comments and suggestions regarding additional local routing and/or service changes have been provided to the MCTS staff for its consideration. Local bus service over Vliet Street was re-established in March 2009 when Milwaukee County Transit System Route No. 33 began operation. Many of the other suggested changes have been considered by the transit system in the past but did not meet warrants for transit service. Others could not be implemented within the transit system's constrained operating budget but could potentially be implemented in the future if additional funding is made available to the transit system. The County Board created the Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC) to advise the Milwaukee County Committee on Transportation, Public Works, and Transit on transit service issues. The TSAC would likely advise the County on the merits of the service changes identified above and in the other public comments should additional local funding become available.

- 13 comments on the proposed express bus services and BRT routes or stops including:
 - Use the express bus route alignments operated in the year 2000 (one comment);
 - Consider creating additional express bus routes over Route Nos. 15, 31, and 62 and to serve the Southridge Mall in the City of Greenfield and the Brookfield Square Shopping Center in the City of Brookfield (two comments);
 - Route the BRT service over Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Milwaukee and include a stop at Water Street and Wisconsin Avenue (one comment);
 - The BRT route should serve the Social Security Office at 6300 W. Fond du Lac Avenue and the Intermodal Transit Station in downtown Milwaukee (two comments);
 - Support was expressed for BRT service for the southern part of Milwaukee County (one comment);
 - Use bus shelters for BRT that do not obscure passenger views of approaching buses (one comment);

- It may be possible to extend the service life of buses in the fleet by assigning buses to operate on an express route (one comment); and
- Light rail transit service should be considered as an alternative to BRT service (four comments).

Response

The express bus alignments identified in the Alternative Improvement Plans were drawn from the routes previously operated by the MCTS between 1992 and 2002 including Route Nos. 1 (Metrolink Northwest Express) and 3 (Metrolink Bluemound Express). The express routes serve corridors with high ridership local routes and represent the services which have the best potential for implementation within the 5-year planning period for the transit system development plan. The express routes represent an initial stage of a network of express routes serving Milwaukee and Waukesha Counties that have long been identified under the Commission's regional transportation system plans. Other express bus routes such as those suggested in the public comments can be advanced for implementation in the future.

Comments on the routing, stops, and shelters for the Fondy-National BRT line have been provided to the Milwaukee County and transit system staff for consideration in refining the BRT service. The County has no intention at this time of converting the BRT service to light rail transit.

- o Two comments specific to freeway flyer routes or service:
 - Consider creating a new freeway flyer route operating between the State Fair Park park-ride lot and new development along S. 27th Street in the City of Franklin including the new Northwestern Mutual Life campus and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare (one comment); and
 - Consider providing freeway flyer service in the non-peak direction to serve reverse commute travel (one comment).

Response

The new Northwestern Mutual Life campus and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare facility would not be expected to generate enough transit ridership to make a special freeway flyer route dedicated to those centers financially viable during the 5 year planning period.

Instead, the alternative plans propose serving these centers with an extension of the express bus service to be operated over S. 27th Street.

The transit system currently provides limited reverse commute service over several freeway flyer routes but this service attracts very little ridership. An expansion of freeway flyer service to provide for both traditional commuter and reverse-commute service is recommended under the Commission's adopted regional transportation system plan for the year 2035. In comparison to the other service improvements identified under the alternative improvement plans, expansion of reverse commute service was considered to have a low priority for the next five years.

- Four comments requesting changes to passenger fares:
 - A suggestion to operate the service improvements without charging users a fare for a trial period (one comment); and
 - Consider fares that provide incentives to ride such as deeply discounted passes and tickets, free ride days, a free ride zone in downtown Milwaukee (three comments).

Response

These suggestions have been incorporated into the final recommended transit system development plan which recommends that Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) funds be sought to offset the loss of revenues from such reduced and free fare initiatives.

- Six comments regarding transfers:
 - Maintaining or improving transfer connections should be considered in implementing the proposed service changes (two comments);
 - Consider extending the one-hour period that transfers can be used; one-hour is not long enough (two comments); and
 - Improve connections with transit services operated by adjacent counties and for passengers at the Intermodal Transit Station after 10:00 p.m. (two comments).

Response

Alternative Improvement Plans 1 and 2 both propose increasing service frequencies on the highest ridership routes in the system, reducing headways to no more than 10 minutes during peak periods and no more than 20 minutes during off-peak periods on weekdays,

and to no more than 30 minutes on weekends. The increases in service frequency will reduce waiting times and improve the convenience of transferring between routes.

- A total of 13 comments were made opposing specific service changes. Ten of these comments opposed the BRT service due to elimination of all local bus service in the BRT corridors, the perception that travel times with the BRT service would increase due to the need to transfer to a connecting shuttle route at the end of the BRT line, and a perception that the long length of the BRT route would result in unreliable service. Two comments indicated that the alternative plans were not bold enough and should have proposed larger increases in service. One comment was made in opposition to equipping all buses with bicycle racks.

Response

Transit system ridership records indicate that 75 to 85 percent of all passenger boardings and alightings along the Fondy-National BRT alignment currently occur at bus stops that would be served by the proposed BRT line. While some passengers may need to transfer to connecting local and shuttle routes at the ends of the BRT line, efforts will be made to coordinate the schedules for the BRT line and shuttle services at the end of the line to keep transfer times low. Despite the long length of the proposed BRT route, the transit system anticipates it will be able to maintain schedules and provide reliable service through the use of traffic signal prioritization and automated vehicle location technologies.

Alternative Improvement Plans 1 and 2 propose increases of 22 and 15 percent, respectively, over the 1.34 million annual revenue vehicle hours of service budgeted for the year 2008. These increases are both significant and achievable over the planning period.

Strong support was expressed for installing bicycle racks on MCTS buses in the public comments received during the initial set of public informational meetings held in early 2007. In response to those comments, a project to purchase and install the bicycle racks was approved and completed by Milwaukee County in 2009.

- 11 comments that expressed concerns over the negative impacts which some of the service changes could have on people with disabilities. These included seven concerned about the

accessibility of the BRT service and the impact of its wide stop spacing on riders using wheelchairs; two requesting that paratransit service be expanded along with fixed-route bus services and consideration be given to the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in implementing service improvements; one requesting that a weekly pass for disabled riders be offered by the transit system.

Response

All vehicles and stops/stations used in providing the BRT service will include features to make them accessible to people with disabilities. The wide stop spacing for the proposed express bus and BRT routes is essential to increasing operating speeds and reducing travel times over those for local bus service. The stops that will be retained are used by 75 percent or more of passengers along the existing local bus routes that will be affected. Disabled passengers who believe the wide stop spacing prevents them from using the express bus or BRT services can request paratransit service through the Transit Plus program. No significant changes are envisioned for the Transit Plus Program under the alternative improvement plans as the paratransit service area includes all of Milwaukee County and the current paratransit service hours cover the expanded service hours proposed for the bus system. The suggestion that the transit system offer a weekly pass for disabled riders has been incorporated into the final recommended transit system development plan.

RECOMMENDED SHORT-RANGE TRANSIT SERVICE PLAN

The public comments received on the alternative plans indicated strong support for making improvements to the MCTS. The final recommended short-range transit system development plan for the MCTS is based on the transit service improvements proposed under Alternative Improvement Plan 1, Extensive Service Expansion. This alternative plan was selected as the basis for the recommended plan as it proposed the broadest level of service improvement, about a 22 percent expansion of transit service over year 2010 levels. It would restore the service which was eliminated over the last several years, and further improve the convenience and speed of transit service. To implement this plan, dedicated local funding such as the proposed 0.5 percent sales tax will be necessary. The recommended plan serves to identify the transit improvement and expansion which could occur in the short term—about a five year period—upon enactment of dedicated local transit funding.

Proposed Service Changes

The recommended plan focuses on transit improvements that would restore service that was eliminated over the last several years, expanding access to transit service throughout more of Milwaukee County. It would also reduce travel times, making transit more competitive with travel by private automobile and increasing transit ridership. This would be accomplished by extending routes to unserved areas in Milwaukee County with significant population or employment concentrations; eliminating bus turn-back points so the same service level is provided over the entire lengths of each route including at the ends of the routes; expanding weekday and weekend service periods to provide for desirable hours of service on more routes; increasing the frequency of service to provide for desirable headway levels on more routes; and reducing transit travel times by adjusting Freeway Flyer service and by converting major local routes to express routes. The specific improvements to MCTS bus services that are recommended under the plan are identified below and in Table 7-1.

New Local Bus Routes and Adjust Alignments of Existing Local Bus Routes

To address the unmet needs for service in the far northern, western, and southern portions of the County, the plan proposes to extend or add several bus routes, restoring service that was eliminated over the last several years (see Map 7-1). The proposed changes to the local bus routes will provide:

- An east-west route to serve the commercial and office development along Brown Deer Road;
- Better transit service coverage in north-central and western Milwaukee County;
- An extension of local bus service to the Village of Hales Corners;
- An extension of local bus service to industrial and office parks in Franklin and Oak Creek;
- Restoration of bus service over Route Nos. 14, 33, and 35 that were reduced or eliminated under the 2010 Milwaukee County budget; and
- Improved connectivity between transit system routes and ease in transferring between routes.

The local bus services in this group of improvements would provide a service increase of about 64,000 additional annual bus hours, or about 4 percent, over year 2010 levels.

Table 7-1

**RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE BUS SERVICES
PROVIDED BY THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM**

Service Description	Estimated Recommended Plan Annual Vehicle Hours	Percent Change from 2010 Budget Vehicle Hours	
		Total	Average Annual
Total 2010 Budget Bus Service	1,327,500	- -	- -
Increment for Recommended Service Improvements			
- New Local Routes and Route Extensions and Restored Local Bus Services ^a	64,000	4.8	
- Remove Bus Turn-backs on Selected Local Routes to Provide Consistent Headways over Route ^c	20,000	1.5	
- Expand Service Hours on Local Routes to Desirable Service Levels ^b	13,000	1.0	
- Reduce Headways on Local Routes to Desirable Service Levels ^b	118,000	8.9	
- Upgrade Freeway Flyer Bus Service	32,000	2.4	
- Convert Local Bus to Express Bus Service ^d	54,000	4.1	
Total Increment for All Improvements	301,000	22.7	4.2
Total Under the Recommended Plan	1,628,500	- -	- -

^a Includes restoring the service cuts made to Routes No. 14, 33, and 35 under the 2010 Milwaukee County operating budget.

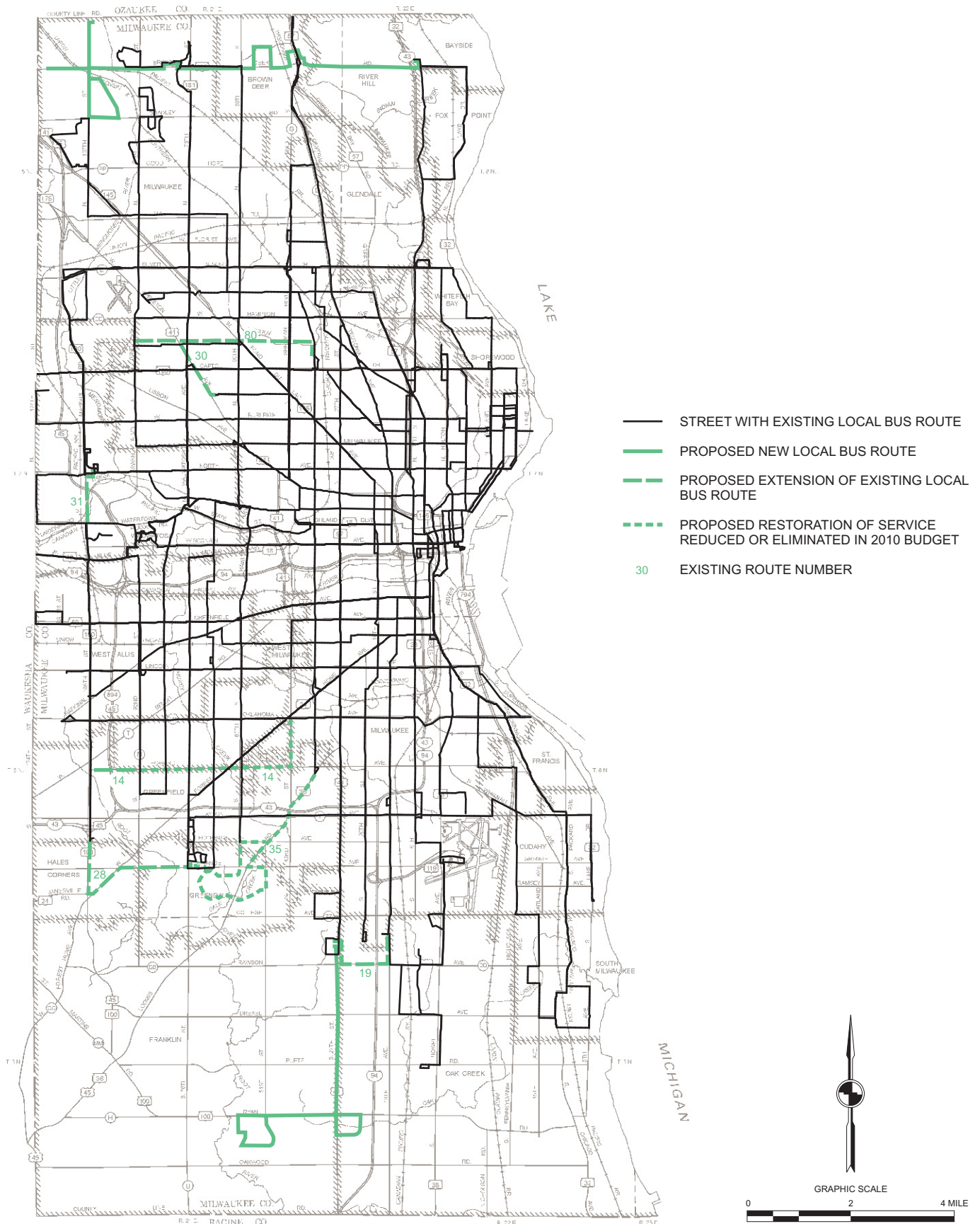
^b Service hours and frequencies on the local routes outside express bus corridors with the highest ridership would be increased to meet desirable service frequencies and service hours for both weekday and weekend periods of operation.

^c Bus turn-back points would be eliminated from weekday, Saturday, and Sunday service schedules.

^d Express bus routes would be implemented along Route Nos. 10 and 30 between the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; along Route Nos. 18 and 23 between Summit Place (S. 70th Street and W. Greenfield Avenue) and Midtown Center (N. 60th Street and W. Fond du Lac Avenue); and along Route Nos. 27, 80, and 63 between S. 27th Street and Sycamore Street (Wal-Mart) and the Bayshore Shopping Center. The express routes would replace existing local bus service between the points identified except along Wisconsin Avenue between N. 35th Street and Cass Street where local service over Route No. 30 would be continued.

Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.

CHANGES TO THE LOCAL BUS ROUTES OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM PROPOSED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN



Elimination of Bus Turn-back Points Along Local Routes

Many bus routes in Milwaukee County have “turn-back points”, points where some of the buses turn around before reaching the terminus of the route. Transit systems use turn-back points to efficiently provide frequent service on the higher-ridership main or trunk portions of routes and less frequent service at the ends of the routes. The recommended plan proposes to provide the same service levels on weekdays and weekends over the entire lengths of Route Nos. 35, 57, and 64, including at the ends of each route. Map 7-2 displays the affected route segments. The elimination of bus turn-backs on the identified routes represents a service increase of about 20,000 additional annual bus hours or 1.5 percent over year 2010 levels.

Extension of Service Hours for Local Bus Routes on Weekdays and Weekends

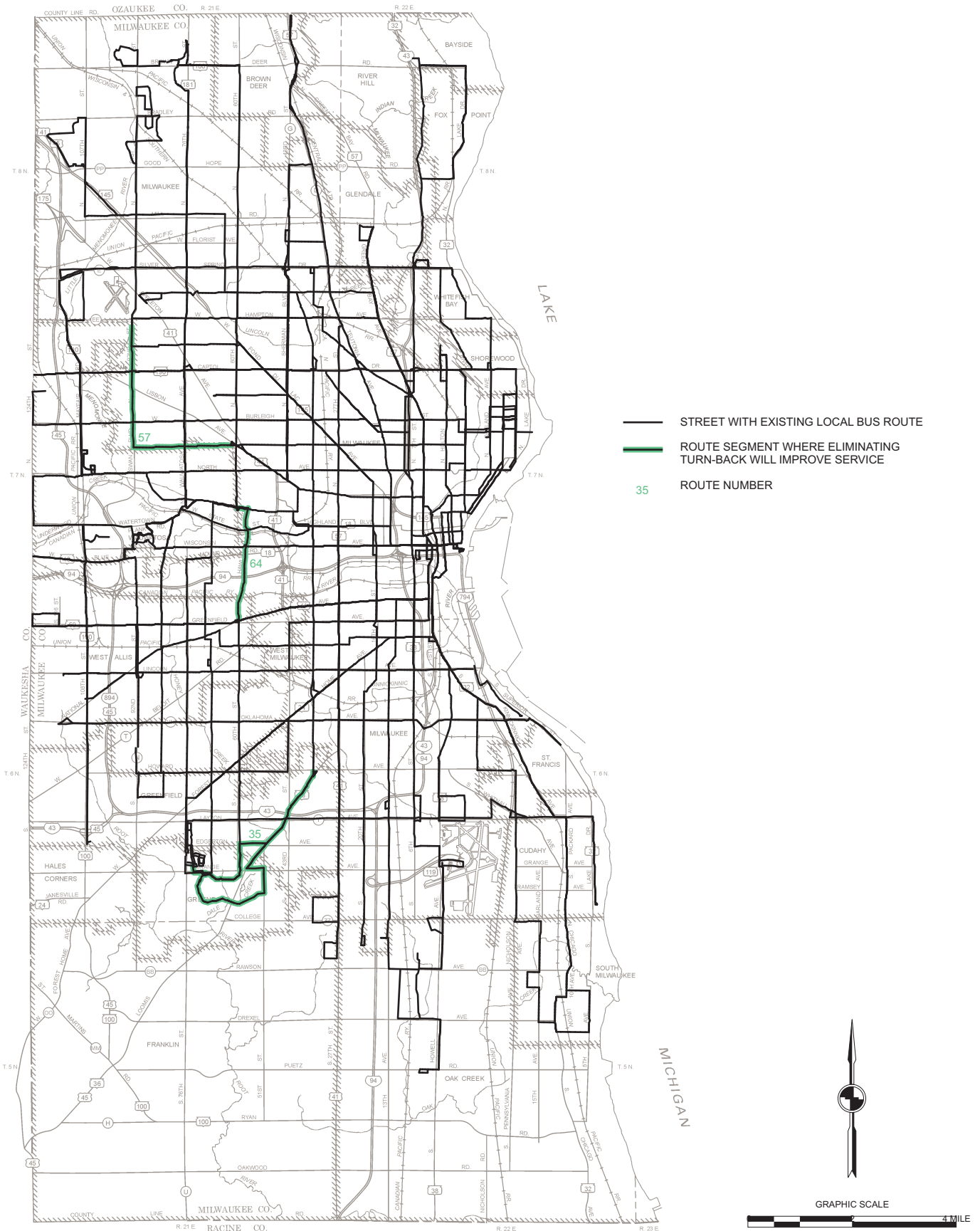
Lengthening bus route schedules to the number of hours specified in the service standards—20 hours a day—would address unmet needs for longer service hours identified in both the performance evaluation and in public comments. Bus routes operating from approximately 5:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. permit travel to and from all three traditional work shifts. Most local routes (25 of 30) currently operate 20 hours a day on weekdays, but only half (14 of 30) operate 20 hours a day on Saturdays, and about a third (9 of 30) operate 20 hours a day on Sundays. The recommended plan would improve the weekday schedules for Route Nos. 35 and 80 to provide service on the southern portion of their routes during morning and evening periods. On Saturdays and Sundays, the plan would lengthen route schedules to attain the desired service hours on the 15 highest-ridership local routes, and the five routes converted to express service. Map 7-3 displays the affected route segments for weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The provision of desirable service hours on 15 routes represents an increase of about 13,000 additional annual bus hours, or 1 percent over year 2010 levels.

Increases in Service Frequency on Local Bus Routes

The Milwaukee County Transit System relies upon a grid system of local routes to serve the County population, jobs, and activity centers. Under this type of route system, transfers between one or more routes and attendant waits for two or more buses are generally required to complete a trip. Service frequencies or “headways”—the amount of time between bus arrivals at a stop—directly affect the times passengers spend waiting for each bus and establishes the convenience of service and resultant service use. High service frequencies increase the convenience of using the service, and result in higher ridership.

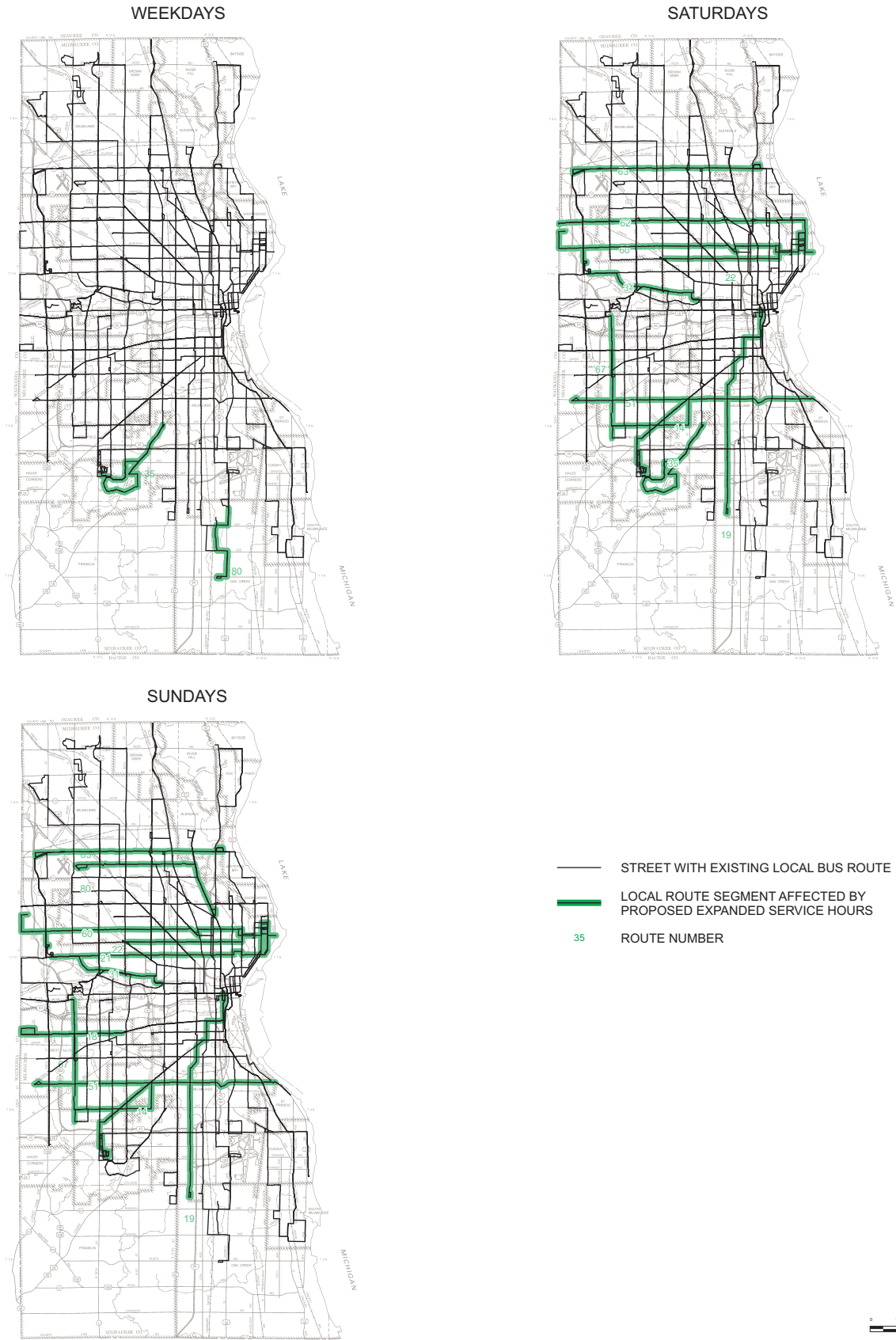
The service standards established for the study specify that buses should arrive no more than 10 minutes apart during weekday peak periods; no more than 20 minutes apart during weekday off-peak periods; and

**LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENTS OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM WHERE
TURN-BACKS ARE PROPOSED TO BE ELIMINATED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN**



Map 7-3

**LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENTS OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM WHERE
SERVICE HOURS ARE PROPOSED TO BE EXPANDED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN**



no more than 30 minutes apart on weekends. Currently, only a small area in the central portion of the County is served by local routes meeting the standards. The plan recommends that service frequencies be increased to attain the desirable headways on the 15 highest-ridership local routes, in addition to the five routes converted to express service. Map 7-4 displays the affected route segments for weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. The provision of desirable headways on 15 routes represents a service increase of about 118,000 additional annual bus hours, or 8 percent over year 2010 levels.

Upgrades to Freeway Flyer Service

The plan also recommends expanding some freeway flyer services to address the increase in ridership on those routes in recent years, ensure the routes meet the service standard that all passengers have a seat, and improve transit travel times. The improvements include:

- Providing a minimum of 10 bus trips over each freeway flyer route during weekday morning and afternoon peak periods;
- Creating one new freeway flyer route so that each route stops at no more than two park-and-ride lots (a service standard); and
- Adding two midday round-trips to each freeway flyer route.

The freeway flyer services described above represent a service increase of about 32,000 additional annual bus hours, or about 2 percent, over year 2010 levels.

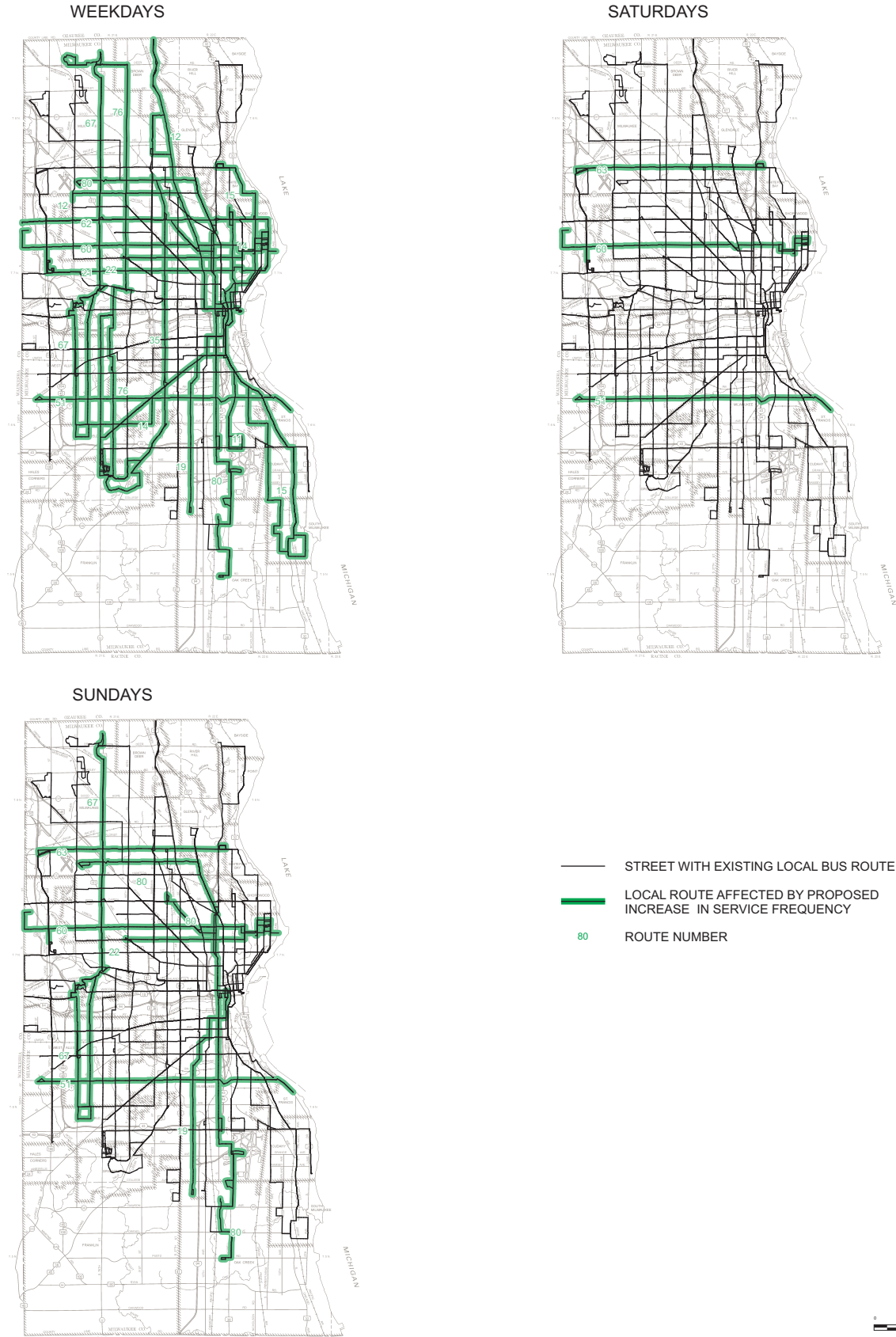
New Express Bus Service

The plan recommends converting three high-ridership local bus routes into express bus routes in order to improve transit travel times. Map 7-5 displays the recommended express bus routes. All routes would operate between 5:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. seven days a week, with frequent service. Buses would arrive every 7-10 minutes during weekday peak periods; every 9-16 minutes during weekday off-peak periods; and every 10-20 minutes on weekends.

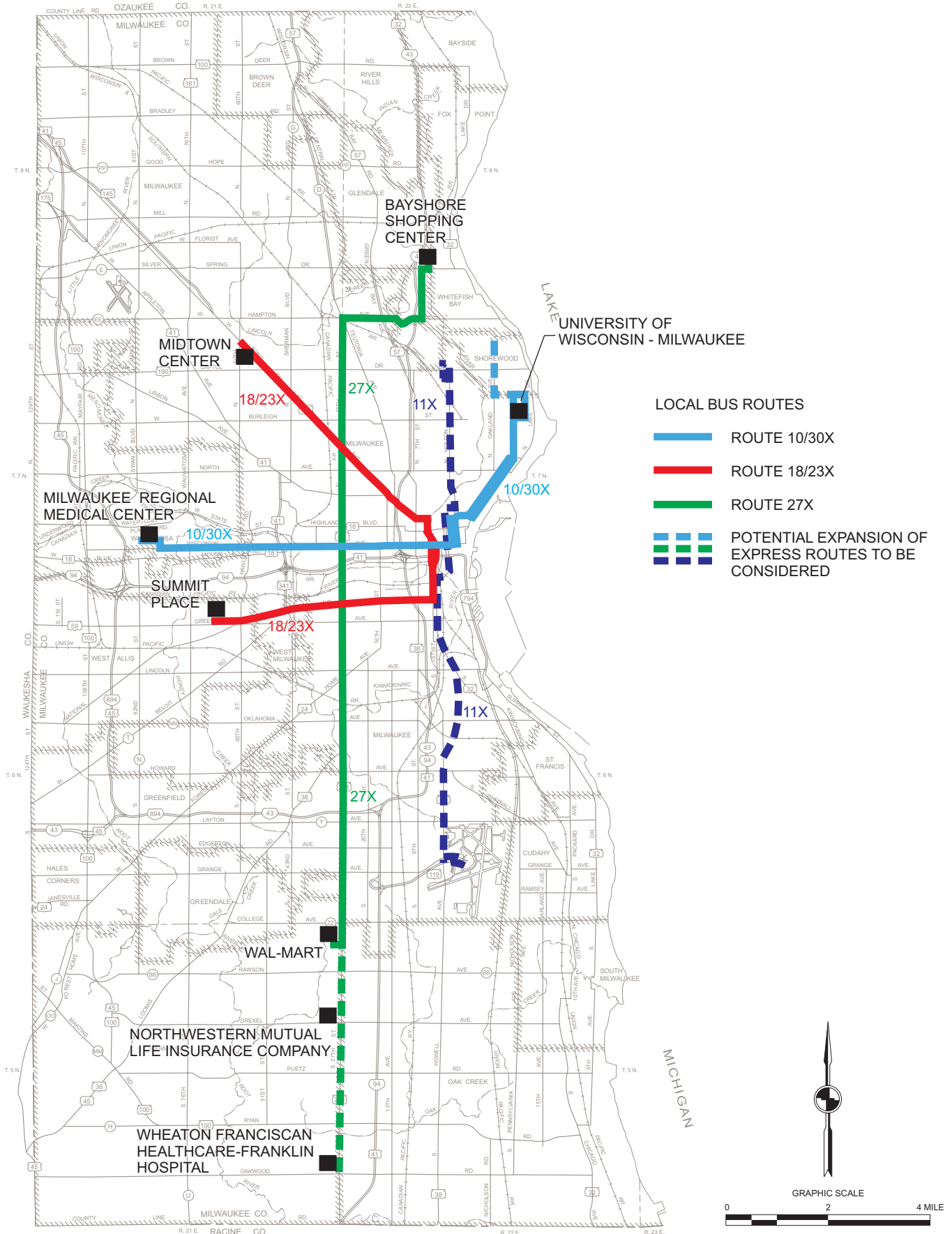
- Route 10/30X would run from the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center in Wauwatosa to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) over portions of Route Nos. 10 and 30. This route could also be extended north on Oakland Avenue to the intersection of Oakland Avenue and Kensington Boulevard in Shorewood.

Map 7-4

LOCAL ROUTES OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM WHERE SERVICE FREQUENCY IS PROPOSED TO BE INCREASED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN (OUTSIDE OF EXPRESS BUS CORRIDORS)



EXPRESS BUS ROUTES PROPOSED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN



- Route 18/23X would operate between Summit Place (S. 70th St. and Greenfield Avenue) and Midtown Center (N. 60th Street and Fond du Lac Avenue) over portions of Route Nos. 18 and 23.
- Route 27X would be a north-south route between the Bayshore Town Center and Wal-Mart (S. 27th Street and Sycamore Street) over the entire length of Route No. 27, with the addition of an extension to the Bayshore Town Center. This route could be extended south to the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. Campus at S. 27th Street and Drexel Avenue, or to the new Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare hospital near S. 27th Street and Oakwood Road.
- A possible fourth express bus route also shown on Map 7-5 would be Route 11X running from the near north side at W. Capitol Drive and Holton Street through downtown to Milwaukee County's General Mitchell International Airport. The City of Milwaukee has indicated that the airport deserves consideration for express service.

Local bus service would be retained over the portions of the affected local routes not converted to express service by operating new or restructured local routes. A potential restructuring of these local routes could be undertaken as follows:

- A new route with two branches would be created from Route 18 to serve Greenfield Avenue and National Avenue west of 92nd Street.
- Two new routes would be created from the Route 23 branches serving the Bradley Woods Business Park and the Park Place Business Park.
- Route 10 would be restructured, retaining the eastern segments from Fond du Lac Avenue and North Avenue, through downtown Milwaukee and north to Bayshore Town Center. A new local route would be created along the section of Route 10 that currently serves Bluemound Road west of the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center.
- Route 30 would still operate on Sherman Boulevard and Wisconsin Avenue, but would terminate in downtown Milwaukee instead of continuing to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus. The Downer Avenue portion of Route 30 would be replaced by an extension of Route 62.

- A new shuttle route from Bayshore Town Center would provide service to Glendale Industrial Park (formerly served by Route 27).

The three basic express bus routes described above represent a service increase of about 54,000 additional annual bus hours, or 4 percent, over year 2010 levels. Because the express services will replace the existing local bus service, the additional annual bus hours needed are solely due to the improved service frequency.

The proposed express service represents an incremental move—achievable within a 5-year planning period—toward a faster system. A basic level of express service would be created by eliminating infrequently used stops to achieve stop spacing of one-quarter mile outside downtown Milwaukee. The conversion to express service would retain the most frequently used stops (representing at least 75 percent of current passenger boarding's and alighting on local routes). The express service could be upgraded to bus rapid transit (BRT) service similar to proposals that have been advanced by the Milwaukee County Executive and the City of Milwaukee Mayor. Enhancements to upgrade express bus service to BRT service could include exclusive bus lanes, transit priority at traffic signals, next-bus information displays, buses of a different design or with special markings and paint schemes, and specially designed bump-out bus stops. The upgrading of express bus routes to BRT could also entail some route realignment and wider stop spacing, along with re-introduction of local bus service. The possibility of incorporating some of the BRT enhancements into the initial express bus route—including signal priority, minor street redesign at bus stops, and using buses with special paint schemes—could be explored as the express routes are moved into implementation.

Two projects that would implement BRT services are currently under development by Milwaukee County. One project was proposed as the transit improvement alternatives were released for public review and comment in January 2009. This BRT project would connect the Midtown Center at 60th Street and Capitol Drive to Downtown Milwaukee and continue through Downtown to operate over National and Greenfield Avenues to Wisconsin State Fair Park. The County submitted a funding application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the project in Spring 2009. A second project was proposed under the Milwaukee County Executive's 2010 Budget. This project would connect the Milwaukee County Regional Medical Center with Downtown Milwaukee and continue through to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, operating over Bluemound Road, Wisconsin Avenue, Prospect and Farwell Avenues, and Oakland Avenue and Kenwood Boulevard. These proposed BRT lines closely follow the alignments of express bus Routes 18/23X and 10/30X shown in Map 7-5. Service over the routes would

be provided with specially marked buses to clearly identify the BRT service and would operate in mixed traffic utilizing traffic signal prioritization to speed up bus travel by extending the time of a green signal or reducing the time of a red signal as buses approach intersecting streets.

Passenger Fares

The plan proposes modest increases in passenger fares for both bus and for paratransit services over the five-year period of plan implementation. For MCTS bus service, the adult cash fare would be increased by \$0.25 from \$2.25 to \$2.50 per trip and the price of a weekly pass would rise from \$17.50 to \$18.50. The fare for people with disabilities using Transit Plus paratransit services would be increased by \$0.50 from \$3.25 to \$3.75 per trip. The proposed Transit Plus fares would remain less than the maximum of two times the base fare charged for bus service allowed under Federal regulations. Cash, ticket and pass fares in other categories would be increased by similar proportions. The proposed fare increases for the transit system would keep fare increases at the rate of general price inflation, and in pace with anticipated increases in operating expenses thereby maintaining a stable farebox recovery rate.

It is also recommended that the transit system offer promotional fares on the new express and local bus routes proposed under plan. This could include offering free rides or rides at half fare when service is initiated, lasting for a brief period such as the first week of operation. Funds are potentially available through the Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program to offset 80 percent of the costs of such a promotion.

The plan also recommends that a new weekly or monthly pass be established for disabled MCTS riders. The pass should be priced at \$8.75 per week or \$32.00 per month which is one-half the cost of the weekly and monthly adult passes currently offered by the transit system.

Paratransit Services for People with Disabilities

The plan proposes no significant changes to the County's paratransit service for people with disabilities provided by the Transit Plus Program. The paratransit service area includes all of Milwaukee County and the current paratransit service hours cover the expanded service hours proposed for the bus system. While no changes to the paratransit service are required to respond to the recommended changes in bus service, total operating costs for Transit Plus program since the year 2000 have increased twice as fast as the costs for the County bus service--by about 80 percent for Transit Plus compared to about 39 percent for bus service. Such increases in paratransit costs could draw local funding away from the fixed-route bus system if they continue in the future. This would increase the potential for service cuts and fare increases

for the bus system, particularly in the absence of dedicated local funding. The County will need to closely monitor future increases in paratransit service costs.

PLAN PERFORMANCE AND COST

Operating Funding Needs for the Recommended Plan under Potential Funding Scenarios

In order to forecast the costs and local funding needs for the recommended plan, factors that affect the transit system operating budget were analyzed to identify in particular their recent trends. The factors, along with their trends, are discussed in Table 7-2. Using the recent trends of these factors, Commission staff developed projected values for the factors for the five year planning period as displayed in Table 7-3. These values were then used to calculate the future operating costs and the public funds needed for the MCTS under the recommended plan as shown in Table 7-4 and in the detailed tables in Appendix E. Based on the assumptions in Table 7-3, the recommended plan will require annual operating assistance of approximately \$160.4 million at the end of the planning period. Table 7-4 also presents the estimated Federal, State, and Milwaukee County share of operating assistance for the recommended transit system.

Capital Needs for the Recommended Plan

Significant capital investments are necessary to maintain the existing transit system equipment and facilities as well as to provide for the recommended service improvements. As the recommended plan was being developed, Milwaukee County undertook several capital projects identified in Chapter VI as needed for the existing system:

- In 2009, the County purchased 90 replacement 40-foot buses using Federal funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 Capital Program “earmark” funds awarded between 2006 and 2009. The ARRA funds covered 100 percent of the costs of 45 replacement buses and the FTA Section 5309 earmark funds covered approximately 80 percent of the costs of an additional 45 replacement buses. Delivery of these buses began in July 2010. In 2010, the County is using its remaining FTA Section 5309 earmark funds to purchase another 35 replacement buses with delivery anticipated in mid-2011. However, the available Federal funds are sufficient to cover only about 20 percent of the total costs for the bus order with the County covering the remaining 80 percent--about four times the minimum local share of 20 percent allowed under the Section 5309 program.

Table 7-2

**KEY FACTORS AND ASSUMPTIONS AFFECTING THE
FUNDING NEEDS OF THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM**

Factor	Discussion
Operating Expense per Vehicle Hour of Service	Operating expense per vehicle hour increased by 2.8 percent annually between 1995 and 2000 (during system expansion) and by 5.6 percent annually between 2001 and 2009 (during system contraction).
State Operating Assistance	Annual operating assistance provided by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation through the Section 85.20 program has covered between 39 and 43 percent of the operating expenses for the transit system in recent years. The amount of Section 85.20 funding received by Milwaukee County increased by 5.2 percent annually from 1995 to 2000 (during system expansion) and by 2.5 percent annually from 2001 to 2009 (during system contraction).
Federal Formula Funds	The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides annual allocations of Section 5307/5340 formula funds, which are intended for capital purchases but can be used for the maintenance elements of operating expenses. These funds covered about 11 percent of transit system operating expenses in 2009. In the late 1990's, Milwaukee County accumulated a "bank" of about \$40 million in unused Section 5307 funds. In an attempt to avoid service cuts, since 2000 the banked allocations have been used to pay for operating expenses and capital projects, leaving less than \$5 million at the end of 2009. Since 2000, the County's annual allocation of new FTA Section 5307/5340 funding has ranged from \$17.0 million in 2000 to \$19.3 million in 2009. The County's 2010 allocation of Section 5307/5340 funds was approximately \$19.0 million.
Capital Needs and Federal Capital Assistance Funds (Section 5309 "Earmark" Funds and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds)	Milwaukee County received about \$5.1 million annually in Federal earmarks through the FTA Section 5309 program from 1999 to 2003, and about \$3.1 million annually in earmark funds in 2004 and 2005. These funds provided the bulk of the funds used over this period to purchase bus replacements. From 2006 through 2009, the Federal earmarks were reduced to about \$2.1 million per year but the County was able to supplement the earmark funds with a one-time allocation in 2009 of about \$25.7 million in ARRA funds. The County is using the recent earmarks and ARRA funds to purchase 90 buses in 2009 and 35 buses in 2010. The County will need to replace an additional 198 ^a buses purchased between 1996 and 2001, and will also need 75 more buses to expand the fleet to implement the recommended service improvements. The total of 273 buses that will need to be purchased over the five-year plan implementation period will require a total of \$85.7 million in Federal funds, or about \$14.3 million per year. The current levels of Section 5309 earmark funds and Section 5307 formula funds are not sufficient to fund the County's additional bus replacement and fleet expansion needs. Therefore, a large portion of the annual allocation of Section 5307 funding (now used for operating expenses) will need to be used for bus purchases and more local funds will be required to cover operating expenses.
Transit Fares	Between 2003 and 2010, MCTS has raised transit fares by about 35 percent. Bus and paratransit fares are assumed to increase with inflation through 2016. Ridership is assumed to decrease 0.3 percent for every 1 percent increase in fares, in accordance with the Simpson-Curtin rule of transit fare elasticity, a commonly-used estimation tool in the transit industry.

^aIncluding 30 40-foot buses purchased in 1996; 9 30-foot buses purchased in 1998; 90 40-foot buses purchased in 2000; and 69 40-foot buses purchased in 2001.

Source: SEWRPC.

Table 7-3

**ESTIMATES OF FACTORS DETERMINING FUTURE
TRANSIT FUNDING NEEDS OF THE RECOMENDED PLAN**

Factor Used to Measure Future Funding Needs	Value Assumed for the Recommended Plan over the Five Year Planning Period
Annual Increase in Transit System Operating Costs Per Vehicle Hour	2%
Annual Increase in State Operating Assistance	3.5%
Annual Increase in Federal Formula Funds	2.5%
Annual Amount of Federal Capital Assistance Funds from Earmarks and Other ^a Sources	\$8 million
Bus Purchases for Fleet Replacement and Expansion	Will entail a total expenditure of about \$103.3 million over the planning period, including about \$74.0 million for replacement buses, and about \$29.3 million for fleet expansion. A total of about \$85.7 million in Federal transit aid will be needed, including about \$61.4 million for replacement buses and about \$24.3 million for fleet expansion.
Transit Fares	Expected to increase with inflation (15%)

^a Other potential sources of Federal transit capital assistance include Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program funds, Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds, and the Interstate Cost Estimate (ICE) funds awarded to Milwaukee County in 2009.

Source: SEWRPC

Table 7-4

**FORECAST OPERATING COSTS FOR THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY
TRANSIT SYSTEM UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN IN THE
FINAL YEAR OF THE FIVE YEAR PLANNING PERIOD**

Category	2010 Budget ^a	Final Year of Five Year Recommended Plan ^b (millions)
Costs and Revenues		
Operating Expenses	\$173.2	\$233.8
Passenger and Other Revenues	60.2	73.4
Required Operating Assistance	113.0	160.4
Sources of Assistance		
Federal	\$24.2	\$9.3
State	69.5	85.5
Milwaukee County ^c	19.3	65.6

^aData reflect the adopted 2010 operating budget for the Milwaukee County Transit System.

^bThe assumptions used to prepare the financial forecasts are identified in Table 7-3. Detailed operating costs are presented in Table E-1 of Appendix E.

^cNo constraints were assumed for the total property tax levy for the bus and paratransit services provided by the Milwaukee County Transit System.

Source: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works, Milwaukee County Transit System, and SEWRPC.

Table 7-5

**ESTIMATED TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FOR THE MILWAUKEE
COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN**

Category	2010 Budget ^a (millions)	Total Costs Over Five Year Planning Period ^b (millions)
Bus Fleet		
Replacement Buses	\$25.92	\$74.03
Buses for fleet expansion	--	29.24
Subtotal	\$25.92	\$103.27
Facility Repairs and Renovations	2.79	9.00
Transit Enhancement Projects	--	1.23
Total	\$28.71	\$113.50
Sources of Assistance		
Federal Share	\$12.33	93.90
Local Share	16.38	19.60
Total	\$28.71	\$113.50

^aData reflect the 2010 capital budget for the Milwaukee County Transit System.

^bDetailed capital costs are presented in Table E-2 of Appendix E.

Source: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works, Milwaukee County Transit System, and SEWRPC.

- The County's 2009 ARRA grant also provided funds for additional equipment for all County buses, including new electronic fareboxes and a new bus stop annunciator and passenger information system.
- The County installed bicycle racks on all buses in the existing fleet in 2009 using Section 5307/5340 Formula Program "Transit Enhancement"² funds to cover 95 percent of the costs of the bicycle racks.

The recommended plan will require additional capital projects to be undertaken over the five year plan implementation period. The capital investment required over this period and the projected breakdown between Federal and local funding is provided in Table 7-5 and in Appendix E. The capital projects needed to implement the recommended plan during the five year plan implementation period include:

- Continuing to replace the oldest vehicles in the fleet including 198 buses that were purchased between 1996 and 2001;
- Purchasing 75 additional 40-foot buses and fareboxes to expand the existing fleet and provide the buses needed to implement the recommended service improvements;
- Acquiring and installing bicycle racks for the additional 75 buses noted above using the transit enhancement² funds available to Milwaukee County;
- Making various repairs, renovations, and upgrades to MCTS facilities currently scheduled in the transit system's capital improvement program; and
- Programming various transit enhancement projects such as improving bus stops, adding bus shelters, and adding accessibility features to make it easier for disabled persons to use bus services and facilities.

²The Federal Transit Administration requires grantees to spend a minimum of one percent of their annual allocations of Section 5307/5340 funds on "transit enhancement" projects designed to enhance public transit service or use. These funds can only be used on eligible transit enhancement projects and if they are not spent on such projects, they will revert back to the Federal Transit Administration for use in other parts of the nation. The purchase and installation of equipment for transporting bicycles on buses is one potential use for these transit enhancement funds.

The total cost of the recommended capital projects over the plan implementation period is estimated at about \$113.5 million, or about \$18.9 million annually. Assuming approximately \$93.9 million in Federal funding through the FTA Section 5307/5340 and 5309 programs, Milwaukee County will need to provide about \$19.6 million over the implementation period, or about \$3.3 million annually.

Need for Dedicated Funding for Milwaukee County Transit System

The analysis of the capital and operating funding clearly indicates that the current local property tax levy funding would be inadequate to improve and expand the system. The proposed 0.5 percent sales tax would be sufficient to address the backlog in bus replacement needs and expand transit service by over 20 percent as proposed in the recommended plan, restoring service cuts over the past several years and greatly improving the speed and convenience of transit service.

Public transit in southeastern Wisconsin is uniquely funded in comparison to how other states and metropolitan areas fund transit in that it lacks a local dedicated funding source, as shown in Table 7-6. Public transit in southeastern Wisconsin relies heavily on State and Federal funding and on local property taxes. In the recent past when State and Federal funds have not been sufficient to address inflationary increases in the cost of providing public transit, local officials have chosen to reduce transit services and raise fares rather than increase local property taxes levied to fund public transit. Given these trends and the above estimates of the funds needed for the recommended plan, Milwaukee County cannot continue to rely on the local property tax levy for transit. A dedicated source of local funds needs to be secured to fund the existing and proposed transit services.

The Commission concluded in the 2035 regional transportation system plan that a sales tax would be a necessary funding source to maintain and improve and expand transit service in southeastern Wisconsin. In November of 2008, an advisory referendum held in Milwaukee County passed approving a one percent County sales tax increase, which included an anticipated 0.5 percent for transit. Also in November of 2008, the former “temporary” and “limited authority” Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority recommended that authority be given to enact up to a 0.5 percent sales tax for transit systems in southeastern Wisconsin. In the spring of 2009, Wisconsin Governor James Doyle proposed legislation during the preparation of the 2009-2011 State budget that would have provided authority to levy up to a 0.5 percent sales tax for transit under legislation that created a regional transit authority for Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties. The State legislature rejected the Governor’s proposal, and proposed legislation for a Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail authority and for a Milwaukee County transit authority. Governor Doyle vetoed the Milwaukee County transit authority, which would

Table 7-6

**AVAILABILITY OF DEDICATED LOCAL TRANSIT FUNDING TO TRANSIT SYSTEMS
IN METROPOLITAN AREAS OF SIMILAR SIZE TO THE MILWAUKEE AREA**

	2000 Population (in millions)	Source of Local Dedicated Funding	Percent Operating Funding Provided by Local Funds
St. Louis, MO	2.08	0.25% Sales tax	87%
Denver, CO	1.98	1.0% Sales tax	81%
Cleveland, OH	1.79	1.0% Sales tax	88%
Pittsburgh, PA	1.75	Sales tax	13%
Portland, OR	1.58	0.6618% payroll tax	77%
Cincinnati, OH	1.50	0.3% payroll tax	72%
Norfolk, VA	1.39	--	28%
Sacramento, CA	1.39	0.5% Sales tax	81%
Kansas City, MO	1.36	0.375% Sales tax	78%
San Antonio, TX	1.33	0.5% Sales tax	88%
Las Vegas, NV	1.31	0.25% Sales tax	96%
Milwaukee, WI	1.31	--	22%
Indianapolis, IN	1.22	--	38%
Providence, RI	1.18	6.25 cents per gallon gas tax	14%
Columbus, OH	1.13	0.25% Sales tax	80%
New Orleans, LA	1.01	1.0% Sales tax	76%
Buffalo, NY	0.98	0.125% Sales tax	49%
Memphis, TN	0.97	--	53%
Austin, TX	0.90	1.0% Sales tax	90%
Salt Lake City, UT	0.89	Sales tax	74%
Jacksonville, FL	0.88	1.0% Sales tax	87%
Louisville, KY	0.86	0.2% payroll tax	73%
Charlotte, NC	0.76	0.5% Sales tax	79%

Source: SEWRPC.

have permitted a 0.5 percent sales tax. In April of 2010, another attempt to pass legislation providing authority to enact a 0.5 percent sales tax for transit in Milwaukee County was made, but the legislation was not passed by the State Legislature.

The implementation of the recommended plan would require that legislation providing for a 0.5 percent sales tax for the Milwaukee County Transit System be enacted. The earliest this may occur would be as part of the State 2011-2013 budget legislation. With allowance for the time for the State to administer sales tax collections, this means that implementation could at the earliest begin in 2012. The recommended transit system development plan proposes that service improvement and expansion would be staged over a subsequent five year period.

In the absence of dedicated local transit funding, it will not be possible to implement the recommended plan of service improvement and expansion. Rather, it will be necessary to continue the service reductions and fare increases (well beyond the rate of general price inflation) which have occurred over the last ten years. In addition, the need to replace up to 198 buses over the next few years could result—in the absence of some significant infusion of Federal funds like stimulus or special earmark funds—in the need for a significant reduction of transit service. This reduction could be as high as 25 to 35 percent if all 198 buses need to be replaced. The number of buses that will need to be replaced over the planning period will be affected by whether the size of the bus fleet is reduced by future service reductions.

PLAN ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Plan Adoption

Adoption or endorsement of the recommended Milwaukee County transit system development plan is important to ensuring a common understanding among the concerned units and agencies of government and to enable the staffs of those governments to work cooperatively toward plan implementation. Accordingly, the following plan adoption actions are recommended:

- ***Milwaukee County***

The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors should act to formally adopt the plan as a guide to the provision of transit services in the Milwaukee County area. Importantly, this action would not commit the County to implement any of the recommended service changes, but would indicate that the County agrees the plan would serve as a valuable reference document. The adoption action should be certified to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning

Commission with a request that the plan be incorporated into the regional transportation system plan.

- ***Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission***

Upon receipt of notification of adoption of the plan from Milwaukee County, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission should adopt the plan as an amendment and extension of the regional transportation system plan and formally certify such adoption to all of the local units of government in Milwaukee County, to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and to the Federal Transit Administration.

- ***Wisconsin Department of Transportation***

Upon receipt of the certification by the Regional Planning Commission, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation should act to endorse the plan as a guide for the programming, administration, and granting of State transit assistance funds.

- ***Federal Transit Administration***

Upon endorsement of the plan by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration should endorse the plan as a guide for the programming, administration, and granting of Federal transit funds.

- ***Local Units of Government***

Upon receipt of the certified plan, the concerned city, village, and town boards in Milwaukee County should act to adopt the plan, thereby indicating support to the County in the implementation of that plan. Such actions on the part of the communities concerned would indicate general agreement with services proposed under the plan.

Plan Implementation

It is recommended that Milwaukee County have the primary responsibility for implementing the service changes proposed under the recommended plan. The County's actions should include the following:

- ***Dedicated Funding for MCTS***

Milwaukee County officials and transit system staff should continue to pursue State legislation that will provide dedicated funding for the Milwaukee County Transit System.

- ***Refinement of Recommended Service Changes***

Subject to the approval of the Transportation, Public Works, and Transit Committee of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, Milwaukee County Transit System staff should prepare detailed operating plans which refine the service changes proposed by the plan. The details for the recommended changes should be completed and approved early in the fall of year preceding implementation to coincide with County budget preparation and completion of transit aid applications. Staff in the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works should work with transit system staff in establishing the final service changes.

- ***Public Hearings***

Federal regulations require transit systems using Federal funds to provide the opportunity for comment through public hearings prior to the implementation of significant service and fare changes. The County will need to conduct one or more public hearings for the specific service and fare changes recommended under the transit system development plan.

- ***Federal and State Grant Applications***

Milwaukee County should prepare the applications for the Federal and State funds needed over the planning period to implement the recommended plan. Such applications would need to be prepared annually based on the operating budgets and capital needs identified by transit system staff on a schedule that meets the requirements of the agencies concerned.

SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the recommended short-range transit system development plan for the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), identifying a set of operational and capital improvements for a five year period. The recommended plan is based on the transit service improvements proposed under Alternative Improvement Plan 1, Extensive Service Expansion. This alternative plan proposed the broadest level of service improvement of the alternative improvement plans considered under the study. The public comments received on the alternative plans at public informational meetings held in January 2009 indicated strong support for making these improvements to the MCTS. The improvements recommended under the plan would restore the MCTS services which have been eliminated over the last several years, expanding the availability of transit service and improving the convenience and speed of the transit services provided by the system.

The recommended plan focuses on transit improvements that would restore transit service which was eliminated in recent years, reconnect transit service with jobs throughout Milwaukee County, and improve the speed, frequency, and convenience of transit service. The specific improvements to MCTS bus services that are recommended under the plan include:

- Adding new local bus routes and making changes to existing local routes to provide service to unserved areas in Milwaukee County with significant population and employment concentrations;
- Eliminating bus turn-back points on three local routes--Route Nos. 35, 57, and 64--so the same service level is provided over the entire lengths of each route including at the ends of the routes;
- Extending the service hours for selected local bus routes to cover 20 hours a day on weekdays and weekends. In addition to the five routes converted to express service, service periods would be lengthened on two local routes on weekdays and on the 15 highest-ridership local routes on Saturdays and Sundays.
- Increasing the frequency of service on the 15 highest-ridership local routes, in addition to the five routes converted to express service to desirable service frequencies--no more than 10 minutes during weekday peak periods, 20 minutes during weekday off-peak periods and 30 minutes on weekends. Higher service frequencies will increase the convenience of using the service and result in higher ridership;
- Upgrading freeway flyer service to ensure that all passengers have a seat, to improve transit travel times, and to expand service availability; and
- Converting local bus service to express bus service over five routes serving high ridership corridors in order to improve transit travel times. The express routes--Route Nos. 10/30X, 18/23X, and 27X--would operate between 5:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. seven days a week, with frequent service (7-10 minutes during weekday peak periods, 9-16 minutes during weekday off-peak periods, 10-20 minutes on weekends).

The plan also proposes that increases in passenger fares for both bus and for paratransit services be limited to an increase of no more than the rate of overall price inflation over the planning period. The MCTS adult cash bus fare would be increased by \$0.25 from \$2.25 to \$2.50 per trip and the price of a

weekly pass would rise from \$17.50 to \$18.50. Cash, ticket and pass fares in other categories would be increased by similar proportions and a new weekly or monthly pass for disabled MCTS riders is proposed to be created. The fare for people with disabilities using Transit Plus paratransit services would be increased by \$0.50 from \$3.25 to \$3.75 per trip. The proposed fare increases will be needed in order for fares to keep pace with anticipated increases in operating expenses thereby maintaining a stable farebox recovery rate. It is also recommended that the transit system offer promotional fares on the new express and local bus routes proposed under plan including offering free rides or rides at half fare when service is initiated.

Factors affecting costs and funding for the transit system were analyzed by Commission staff along with projections for the next several years. The recommended plan will require total annual operating assistance of approximately \$160.4 million at the end of the five-year planning period. Significant capital investments will also be necessary to maintain the existing transit system equipment and facilities as well as to provide for the recommended service improvements. The total cost of these needed capital projects over the planning period were estimated at about \$113.5 million with the County's share estimated at about \$19.6 million.

An analysis of the capital and operating funding required for the recommended plan clearly indicated that the current local property tax levy funding would be inadequate to improve and expand the system. A 0.5 percent sales tax would be sufficient to address the backlog in bus replacement needs and expand transit services as proposed under this plan. In the absence of local dedicated funding, the continued reduction in transit service and increases in transit fares well beyond the rate of general price inflation may be expected. Moreover, a reduction in transit service may be expected when the transit system replaces up to 198 buses over the next few years. The reduction could be as high as 25 to 35 percent if all of the 198 buses are replaced with the number of replacement buses dependent on whether the size of the bus fleet is reduced by future service reductions.

* * *

Appendix E

**FORECAST ANNUAL SERVICE LEVELS, RIDERSHIP, AND
OPERATING AND CAPITAL COSTS UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN**

Table E-1

**ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES, OPERATING REVENUES, AND OPERATING ASSISTANCE FOR
THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN**

Bus System ^a							
Characteristic	2010 Budget	Forecast ^b					
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Service Provided							
Total Vehicle Miles	17,841,700	17,841,700	18,651,000	19,460,000	20,269,000	21,078,000	21,887,000
Total Vehicle Hours	1,327,500	1,327,500	1,387,700	1,447,900	1,508,100	1,568,300	1,628,500
Revenue Passengers	40,175,900	40,175,900	41,599,038	43,059,000	43,042,000	44,421,000	44,864,000
Per Vehicle Mile	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0
Per Vehicle Hour	30.3	30.3	30.0	29.7	28.5	28.3	27.5
Costs, Revenues, and Assistance							
Operating Expenses	\$ 145,110,000	\$ 148,016,000	\$ 157,824,000	\$ 167,971,000	\$ 178,453,000	\$ 189,294,000	\$ 200,484,000
Revenues							
Passenger Revenues	\$ 47,293,300	\$ 47,293,000	\$ 48,968,000	\$ 52,446,000	\$ 54,190,000	\$ 55,926,000	\$ 58,323,000
Other	\$ 2,970,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000
Total	\$50,263,300	\$50,293,000	\$51,968,000	\$55,446,000	\$57,190,000	\$58,926,000	\$61,323,000
Required Operating Assistance	\$94,846,700	\$97,723,000	\$105,856,000	\$112,525,000	\$121,263,000	\$130,368,000	\$139,161,000
Percent of Expenses Recovered through Revenues	34.6	34.0	32.9	33.0	32.0	31.1	30.6
Sources of Operating Assistance							
Federal	\$ 21,064,200	\$ 16,010,000	\$ 13,426,000	\$ 14,242,000	\$ 10,058,000	\$ 13,174,000	\$ 6,190,000
State	\$ 57,921,300	\$ 59,948,500	\$ 62,046,700	\$ 64,218,300	\$ 66,465,900	\$ 68,792,200	\$ 71,199,900
County	\$ 15,861,200	\$ 21,764,500	\$ 30,383,300	\$ 34,064,700	\$ 44,739,100	\$ 48,401,800	\$ 61,771,100
Total	\$94,846,700	\$97,723,000	\$105,856,000	\$112,525,000	\$121,263,000	\$130,368,000	\$139,161,000
Per Trip Data							
Operating Cost	\$3.61	\$3.68	\$3.79	\$3.90	\$4.15	\$4.26	\$4.47
Revenue	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.25	\$1.29	\$1.33	\$1.33	\$1.37
Total Operating Assistance	\$2.36	\$2.43	\$2.54	\$2.61	\$2.82	\$2.93	\$3.10
Local Operating Assistance	0.39	0.54	0.73	0.79	1.04	1.09	1.38

Paratransit System ^c							
Characteristic	2010 Budget	Forecast ^b					
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Service Provided							
Total Vehicle Miles	6,504,500	6,636,000	6,770,000	6,904,000	6,583,000	6,717,000	6,851,000
Total Vehicle Hours	477,800	487,500	497,300	507,100	483,500	493,300	503,100
Revenue Passengers	1,216,400	1,241,000	1,266,000	1,291,000	1,231,000	1,256,000	1,281,000
Costs, Revenues, and Assistance							
Operating Expenses	\$28,127,000	\$29,274,000	\$30,460,000	\$31,684,000	\$30,813,000	\$32,065,000	\$33,356,000
Revenues							
Passenger Revenues	\$3,637,200	\$3,711,000	\$3,786,000	\$3,861,000	\$4,248,000	\$4,334,000	\$4,420,000
Other	\$6,277,000	\$6,404,000	\$6,533,000	\$6,662,000	\$7,330,000	\$7,479,000	\$7,628,000
Total	\$9,914,200	\$10,115,000	\$10,319,000	\$10,523,000	\$11,578,000	\$11,813,000	\$12,048,000
Required Operating Assistance	\$18,212,800	\$19,159,000	\$20,141,000	\$21,161,000	\$19,235,000	\$20,252,000	\$21,308,000
Percent of Expenses Recovered through Revenues	12.9	12.7	12.4	12.2	13.8	13.5	13.3
Sources of Operating Assistance							
Federal	\$3,168,000	\$3,168,000	\$3,168,000	\$3,168,000	\$3,168,000	\$3,168,000	\$3,168,000
State	\$11,625,600	\$ 12,032,500	\$ 12,453,600	\$ 12,889,500	\$ 13,340,600	\$ 13,807,500	\$ 14,290,800
County	\$3,419,200	\$3,958,500	\$4,519,400	\$5,103,500	\$2,726,400	\$3,276,500	\$3,849,200
Total	\$18,212,800	\$19,159,000	\$20,141,000	\$21,161,000	\$19,235,000	\$20,252,000	\$21,308,000
Per Trip Data							
Operating Cost	\$23.12	\$23.59	\$24.06	\$24.54	\$25.03	\$25.53	\$26.04
Revenue	8.15	8.15	8.15	8.15	9.40	9.41	9.41
Total Operating Assistance	14.97	15.44	15.91	16.39	15.63	16.12	16.63
Local Operating Assistance	2.81	3.19	3.57	3.95	2.21	2.61	3.00

Table E-1 (continued)

Characteristic	Total Transit System ^d						
	2010 Budget	Forecast ^b					
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Service Provided							
Total Vehicle Miles	24,346,200	24,477,700	25,421,000	26,364,000	26,852,000	27,795,000	28,738,000
Total Vehicle Hours	1,805,300	1,815,000	1,885,000	1,955,000	1,991,600	2,061,600	2,131,600
Revenue Passengers	41,392,300	41,416,900	42,865,038	44,350,000	44,273,000	45,677,000	46,145,000
Costs, Revenues, and Assistance							
Operating Expenses	\$173,237,000	\$177,290,000	\$188,284,000	\$199,655,000	\$209,266,000	\$221,359,000	\$233,840,000
Revenues							
Passenger Revenues	\$50,930,500	\$51,004,000	\$52,754,000	\$56,307,000	\$58,438,000	\$60,260,000	\$62,743,000
Other	\$9,247,000	\$9,404,000	\$9,533,000	\$9,662,000	\$10,330,000	\$10,479,000	\$10,628,000
Total	\$60,177,500	\$60,408,000	\$62,287,000	\$65,969,000	\$68,768,000	\$70,739,000	\$73,371,000
Required Operating Assistance	\$113,059,500	\$116,882,000	\$125,997,000	\$133,686,000	\$140,498,000	\$150,620,000	\$160,469,000
Percent of Expenses							
Recovered through Revenues	29.4	34.1	28.0	33.0	32.9	32.0	31.4
Sources of Operating Assistance							
Federal	\$24,232,200	\$19,178,000	\$16,594,000	\$17,410,000	\$13,226,000	\$16,342,000	\$9,358,000
State	69,546,900	71,981,000	74,500,300	77,107,800	79,806,500	82,599,700	85,490,700
County	19,280,400	25,723,000	34,902,700	39,168,200	47,465,500	51,678,300	65,620,300
Total	\$113,059,500	\$116,882,000	\$125,997,000	\$133,686,000	\$140,498,000	\$150,620,000	\$160,469,000
Per Trip Data							
Operating Cost	\$4.19	\$4.28	\$4.39	\$4.50	\$4.73	\$4.85	\$5.07
Revenue	1.46	1.46	1.45	1.49	1.56	1.55	1.59
Total Operating Assistance	2.73	2.82	2.94	3.01	3.17	3.30	3.48
Local Operating Assistance	0.47	0.62	0.81	0.88	1.07	1.13	1.42

^a Bus system ridership and service data for 2010 reflect the adopted operating budget for the transit system. The forecasts of ridership, service levels, and financial data for the transit system for years 1 through 6 of the short-range planning period were prepared by Commission staff based on the following assumptions:

1. Systemwide average operating costs per total vehicle hour for the bus system were assumed to increase by about 2 percent annually.
2. No constraints were assumed for the total property tax levy for the bus and paratransit services provided by the Milwaukee County Transit System.
3. The base adult cash fare for the bus system, currently at \$2.25 per trip in 2010, will be increased to \$2.50 per trip in year 3 then remain constant through year 6. The cost of an adult weekly pass for the bus system, currently at \$17.50 in 2010, will be increased to \$18.50 in year 2 and \$19.50 in year 6. Increases in other pass and cash fare categories will occur as these fares are raised.
4. The County will obtain about \$8 million annually in Federal Section 5309 earmark funds to fund major capital purchases, including buses, and its annual allocation of Section 5307/5340 formula funds will increase by about 2.5 percent annually. The Section 5309 earmark funds will allow the County to use an average of about \$10.4 million annually in Federal Section 5307 funds between years 1 and 6 to support bus system operations, or about 43 percent less than the \$18.2 million used to support bus system operations under the 2010 budget.
5. The State 85.20 program transit operating assistance funds used for the bus system will increase by 3.5 percent annually.

^b Year 1 represents a year assumed necessary to maintain the current transit system, prior to system improvement and expansion. Years 2 through 6 represent the five year period of staged service improvement and expansion resulting in full implementation of the recommended plan.

^c Transit Plus paratransit ridership and service data for 2010 reflect the adopted operating budget for the paratransit system. The forecast ridership, service, and financial data for years 1 through 6 were prepared by Commission staff based on the following assumptions:

1. Operating costs per total vehicle hour of service will increase by about 2 percent annually.
2. The basic service characteristics for the Transit Plus paratransit service will remain at 2010 levels through year 6. Cash fares for the paratransit service, currently at \$3.25 per trip in 2010, will be increased to \$3.75 per trip in year 4 then remain constant through year 6.
3. Approximately \$1.85 million annually in Federal Section 5307 funds will be used for the Transit Plus Program between years 1 and 6.
4. The State 85.20 program transit operating assistance funds and State 85.21 program specialized transit assistance funds used for the paratransit system will increase by 3.5 percent annually.

^d Total system ridership, service, and financial data exclude the vanpool program operated by the Milwaukee County Transit System.

Source: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works, Milwaukee County Transit System, and SEWRPC.

Table E-2

**CAPITAL EXPENDITURES FOR OPERATING EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES
FOR THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN**

Capital Equipment/Project	2009 Budget	2010 Budget	Forecast Years ^a							
			Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Six Year Total	Average Annual
Bus Fleet										
Replacement Buses	\$ 33,015,500	\$ 13,200,000	\$ 11,250,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 20,025,000	\$ 16,875,000	\$ 25,875,000	\$ 74,025,000	\$ 12,337,500
Buses for fleet expansion	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 14,763,000	\$ 14,375,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 29,138,000	\$ 4,856,300
Subtotal	\$ 33,015,500	\$ 13,200,000	\$ 11,250,000	\$ 14,763,000	\$ 14,375,000	\$ 20,025,000	\$ 16,875,000	\$ 25,875,000	\$ 103,163,000	\$ 17,193,800
Operating Equipment										
Fare box renovation/replacement	\$ 6,960,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
AVL/Radio system upgrade for vehicle annunciators	\$ 2,160,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
Bicycle racks for existing and expanded bus fleet	\$ 650,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 51,000	\$ 50,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 101,000	\$ 16,800
Subtotal	\$ 42,785,500	\$ 13,200,000	\$ 11,250,000	\$ 14,814,000	\$ 14,425,000	\$ 20,025,000	\$ 16,875,000	\$ 25,875,000	\$ 103,264,000	\$ 17,210,600
Facility Repair and Renovation										
Roof replacement (Administration Building, Fond du Lac Avenue Maintenance Building)	\$ 253,400	\$ 300,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
Heating/air conditioning system replacement (Administration Building and Fond du Lac Avenue Maintenance Building)	\$ 456,900	\$ 950,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
Bus vacuum replacement (Fond du Lac Avenue Garage)	\$ --	\$ 575,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
Upgrade/replace data processing equipment	\$ --	\$ 965,000	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
Repair fueling system components (Kinnickinnic Avenue Garage)	\$ 578,100	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --
Other facility renovations and repairs at MCTS facilities system wide	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 9,000,000	\$ 1,500,000
Subtotal	\$ 1,288,400	\$ 2,790,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 9,000,000	\$ 1,500,000
Other										
Transit Enhancement (TE) Projects (to be identified)	\$ --	\$ --	\$ --	\$ 204,000	\$ 210,000	\$ 265,000	\$ 270,000	\$ 276,000	\$ 1,225,000	\$ 204,200
Total	\$ 44,073,900	\$ 15,990,000	\$ 12,750,000	\$ 16,518,000	\$ 16,135,000	\$ 21,790,000	\$ 18,645,000	\$ 27,651,000	\$ 113,489,000	\$ 18,914,800
Federal Share of Costs ^b	\$ 37,823,700	\$ 4,832,000	\$ 10,537,500	\$ 13,665,000	\$ 13,346,800	\$ 18,032,800	\$ 15,422,300	\$ 22,897,100	\$ 93,901,500	\$ 15,650,200
Local Share of Costs	\$ 6,250,200	\$ 11,158,000	\$ 2,212,500	\$ 2,853,000	\$ 2,788,200	\$ 3,757,200	\$ 3,222,700	\$ 4,753,900	\$ 19,587,500	\$ 3,264,600

^a Year 1 represents a year assumed necessary to maintain the current transit system, prior to system improvement and expansion. Years 2 through 6 represent the five year period of staged service improvement and expansion resulting in full implementation of the recommended plan.

^b Assumes 100 percent Federal share for 45 buses purchased in 2009 with Federal ARRA funds. An additional 45 buses were purchase in 2009 using about \$10.5 million in Federal Section 5309 earmark funds from 2009 and prior years. Bus purchases in 2010 reflect approximately \$2.6 million in Federal Section 5309 earmark funds from 2009 and prior years. Bus purchases in years 1 through 6 assume 83 percent FTA funding to account for a 90 percent federal share for ADA-related bus accessibility features and an 80 percent federal share for the bus. An 80 percent Federal share was assumed for all other capital projects.

Source: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works, Milwaukee County Transit System, and SEWRPC.