

WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2015-2019

Transit Service Improvement Alternatives



NEWSLETTER 1

FEBRUARY 2014

WHAT'S INSIDE

Existing Services
-2-

Performance
Evaluation of Existing
Services
-3-

Commuter Express
Alternatives
-4 & 5-

Shared-Ride Taxi
Alternatives
-6 & 7-

Public Meetings
-8-

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Washington County Transit Development Plan is being developed under the guidance of an **Advisory Committee** formed specifically for the plan. Representatives from units of government in Washington County and a variety of agencies with an interest in transportation in the County have been invited to participate in the Committee. A list of the Advisory Committee members can be found on: sewrpc.org/washingtontdp

Washington County and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) are jointly preparing a short-range, five-year plan for public transit services in Washington County. This newsletter summarizes the alternatives developed by the plan's Advisory Committee to improve transit service in the County. Public comments on these alternatives submitted by Thursday, March 20, 2014, will be considered when developing a final recommended Washington County public transit plan for 2015 - 2019.



STEPS COMPLETED TO DATE

- Evaluate the performance of the Washington County Commuter Express and Shared-Ride Taxi
- Develop and evaluate transit service improvement alternatives for the Commuter Express and Shared-Ride Taxi that address the performance evaluation and unmet transit service needs identified by the Advisory Committee

NEXT STEPS

- Obtain public input on the transit service improvement alternatives
- Prepare a five-year recommended transit service improvement plan for Washington County

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

We want to hear your opinion of the alternatives for improving public transit in Washington County. You are invited and encouraged to attend any of the three public information meetings. Times and locations for the public meetings can be found on the back of this newsletter. The public meetings will be in an "open house" format, allowing you to attend at any time during the meeting. To provide comments, please attend one of the public meetings, where you will have the opportunity to leave written comments or speak to a court reporter or staff member to provide oral comments. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you can send written comments in any of the following ways by March 20, 2014:

- Plan Website: www.sewrpc.org/washingtontdp
- E-mail: washingtontransitplan@sewrpc.org
- Mail: P.O. Box 1607, Waukesha, WI 53187-1607
- Fax: (262) 547-1103

All comments will be considered when developing a recommended Washington County public transit plan.

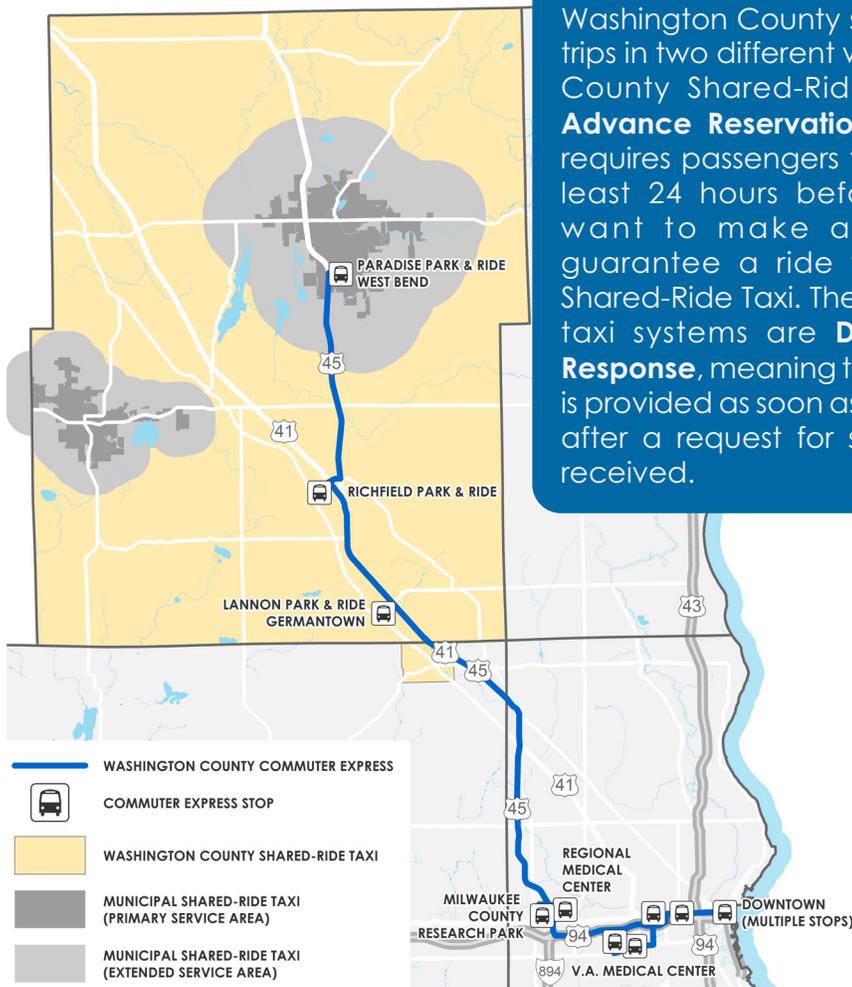
EXISTING PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES IN WASHINGTON COUNTY

WASHINGTON COUNTY COMMUTER EXPRESS

The Washington County Commuter Express (WCCE) provides two commuter bus routes that connect Washington County residents to jobs and services at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, at the Milwaukee County Research Park, at the Veterans Administration Medical Complex, and in downtown Milwaukee. Washington County residents board the buses at three park and ride lots, in West Bend, Richfield, and Germantown (see map below). The WCCE operates on weekdays, providing traditional-commute service from Washington County to Milwaukee County with eight morning trips to downtown Milwaukee, 10 evening return trips from downtown Milwaukee, and four trips each way to the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center. Passengers pay \$3.75 one-way, or \$32.50 for 10 one-way tickets. Ridership has grown over the past decade, with 127,600 passenger trips made in 2011.

WASHINGTON COUNTY SHARED-RIDE TAXI

Using a fleet of sedans and accessible vans, the Shared-Ride Taxi provides door-to-door service throughout the County and a northern part of Menomonee Falls. The Shared-Ride Taxi does not serve rides where both ends of the trip are within Hartford or within West Bend (see below for information on the Hartford City Taxi and West Bend Taxi). The County Taxi service requires advance reservation, and is available Monday through Thursday from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m., Friday and Saturday from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m., and on Sunday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Passengers on the Shared-Ride Taxi may share journeys with other passengers so that the County can more efficiently use vehicles. Fares are distance-based, and range from \$4.25 to \$9.00 for adults, \$3.25 to \$8.00 for students, and \$2.50 to \$5.75 for seniors and people with disabilities. In 2011, the Shared-Ride Taxi provided 99,600 passenger trips.



HARTFORD CITY TAXI

The Hartford City Taxi provides curb-to-curb service within the City of Hartford, and within one mile of its borders in Washington County and ten miles of its borders in Dodge County. The Taxi is a demand-response service, and is available from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. The standard fare is currently \$3.00 per trip. The Hartford City Taxi provided about 21,000 passenger trips in 2011.

WEST BEND TAXI

Similar to the Hartford City Taxi, the West Bend Taxi provides curb-to-curb service for trips within the City of West Bend or which start or end within two miles of the City's borders. Same as the Hartford City Taxi, the West Bend Taxi is a demand-response service. Residents can use the Taxi from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. on Sunday. The standard fare for the service is currently \$4.00, with the fare for minors, seniors, and people with disabilities currently \$3.00. About 123,000 passenger trips were provided in 2011.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

As part of the Washington County Transit Development Plan, the existing County transit services were evaluated by comparing the performance of the Washington County Commuter Express and the Washington County Shared-Ride Taxi to a series of standards developed by the Advisory Committee. These standards were developed to evaluate how effectively the existing County transit services fulfilled the three objectives the Advisory Committee identified

for the transit system. A number of these standards require comparing the two transit services to peer systems from across the country, which were identified as peers because they had similar service types, routes, ridership, budgets, and served areas of a similar density to the Washington County Transit System. The results of this performance evaluation are summarized in the table below, although not all standards are included in this table.

Objective	Standard	Commuter Express	Shared-Ride Taxi
Washington County's public transit system should effectively serve existing travel patterns, meeting the demand and need for transit services, particularly the travel needs of the transit-dependent population.	Major Activity Centers: Maximize the number of major activity centers within one-half mile of a rapid transit route or within the service area of a demand-response service. Major activity centers include commercial areas, educational institutions, medical centers, employers, and facilities serving transit-dependent populations.	Partially Fulfilled Between 10 % and 57 % of Different Types of Activity Centers Served	Fulfilled 100 % Served
	Population: Maximize the number of residents within a 3-mile driving distance of a rapid transit stop or the service area of a demand-response service.	Partially Fulfilled 42 % Served	Fulfilled 100 % Served
	Employment: Maximize the number of jobs within one-half mile of a rapid transit stop, or within the service area of a demand-response service.	Partially Fulfilled 23 % of Milwaukee County Served	Fulfilled 100 % Served
Washington County's public transit system should promote efficient utilization of its services by operating a system that is safe, reliable, convenient, and comfortable for users.	Frequency and Availability: Rapid transit services should operate at least every 30 minutes during the weekday peak period. Shared-ride taxi services should offer a response time of 45 minutes or less in urban areas and four hours or less in rural areas.	Fulfilled Service Every 30 Minutes	Not Fulfilled 24-hr Advance Reservation
	Travel Speeds: Average travel speeds for each trip should be more than 25 m.p.h. for rapid transit services, and more than 10 m.p.h. for demand-responsive services.	Fulfilled At Least 27 m.p.h.	Fulfilled At Least 28 m.p.h.
	Passenger Demand: The ratio of passengers to seats should not exceed 1.00 during any period for rapid transit and demand-responsive services.	Fulfilled Max 1.00	Fulfilled Max 1.00
	Ridership and Service Effectiveness: Transit services should not be more than 20 percent below the median of the peer comparison group on four measures: Passengers per capita, Passengers per vehicle hour, Passengers per vehicle mile, and Passenger miles per vehicle mile.	Partially Fulfilled Meets 2 Out of 4 Measures	Fulfilled Meets All 4 Measures
	On-Time Performance: Transit services should have more than 90 percent of trips on time—defined as being between 0 minutes early and 3 minutes late for fixed-route services and between 15 minutes early and 15 minutes late for demand-response services.	Fulfilled 91 % of Runs On Time	Fulfilled 96 % of Trips On Time
	Travel Times: The ratio of transit to automobile travel time should be less than 2.0.	Fulfilled 1.45 or Less	Fulfilled 1.75 or Less
Washington County's public transit system should be economical and cost effective, meeting all other objectives at the lowest possible cost. Given limited public funds, achieving this objective may result in some standards becoming unattainable.	Fare Structure: The fare policies for transit services should provide for premium fares for premium services, as well as discounted fares for priority population groups and frequent transit riders.	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
	Operating Expenses: Transit services should not exceed the median increases experienced by peer transit systems on five measures: Annual increases in the operating expense per total and revenue vehicle mile, Operating expense per total and revenue vehicle hour, and Operating assistance per passenger.	Partially Fulfilled Meets 2 Out of 5 Measures	Partially Fulfilled Meets 1 Out of 5 Measures
	Cost Effectiveness: The operating cost per passenger and operating expense per passenger mile should not be more than 20 percent above, and the farebox recovery ratio more than 20 percent below, the median for peer transit systems.	Fulfilled Meets All 3 Measures	Partially Fulfilled Meets 2 Out of 3 Measures

Following the performance evaluation of the County's existing transit services, a series of possible alternatives for future transit services were developed based on the results of the performance evaluation, an assessment of unmet transportation needs, and suggestions from members of the Advisory Committee guiding the plan. These alternatives include not making any changes to either the Commuter Express or

the Shared-Ride Taxi, cutting service if the County needs to reduce funding for either service in the future, and a wide variety of improvements in service that the County could consider.

The public meetings shown on the last page of this newsletter are your opportunity to tell the Advisory Committee which alternatives you prefer.

ALTERNATIVES FOR THE COMMUTER EXPRESS

NO CHANGE ALTERNATIVE

Under the "no change" alternative, the existing Washington County Commuter Express (WCCE) would continue to operate unchanged. This alternative projects a relatively stable budget for the WCCE, with County funding expected to be flat between 2015 and 2019. It assumes a fare increase of \$0.25 in 2016 and again in 2019, so that the fare cost keeps pace with inflation. Ridership is expected to fall slightly over the study period due to those fare increases. This is considered a cautious projection, as ridership will likely grow as congestion increases due to the Zoo Interchange reconstruction. County expenses are expected to increase when compared to 2012, but this is due to the estimated loss of 9,000 riders between 2012 and 2013. More detail is provided by the table on this page.

ELIMINATE THE MEDICAL CENTER ROUTE

Due to budgetary constraints, the County may need to reduce its financial support for the Commuter Express service. If this is necessary, the County could consider discontinuing the Medical Center Route, as it has averaged significantly fewer passengers per bus run than the Downtown Route in recent years. Eliminating the Medical Center Route is expected to reduce the required amount of annual County assistance by \$73,000, and decrease ridership by 27,500 annual revenue passengers by 2019. Under this alternative, the estimated amount of County funding would never be greater than \$150,000 during

the plan timeframe. Changes to the WCCE schedule in 2014 may improve the performance of this route, and could influence the results described in this section.

ELIMINATE THE LOWEST PERFORMING RUNS

If it needs to reduce its financial support for the WCCE, the County could also consider eliminating the eight runs that average less than 10 passengers per day. No longer operating the eight lowest-performing runs would save the County \$91,000 each year by 2019, and reduce annual revenue passengers by 21,000. This alternative would reduce schedule flexibility for passengers of both routes, as the Downtown Route would no longer provide northbound service before

3:30 p.m., and the Medical Center Route would only have two runs in each direction. County assistance for the WCCE would be less than \$135,000 between 2015 to 2019 under this alternative.

RAISE FARES FASTER THAN INFLATION

The County could also consider raising fares at a rate higher than the rate of inflation to reduce the level of County assistance. A \$0.25 fare increase

would reduce the required County assistance approximately \$16,000 per year, but also reduce ridership.

SERVICE TO ADDITIONAL DESTINATIONS

There are a number of additional destinations in the Region that the County could consider serving with the WCCE. The following destinations are major regional

**PROJECTED ANNUAL OPERATING STATISTICS
FOR THE COMMUTER EXPRESS NO CHANGE ALTERNATIVE**

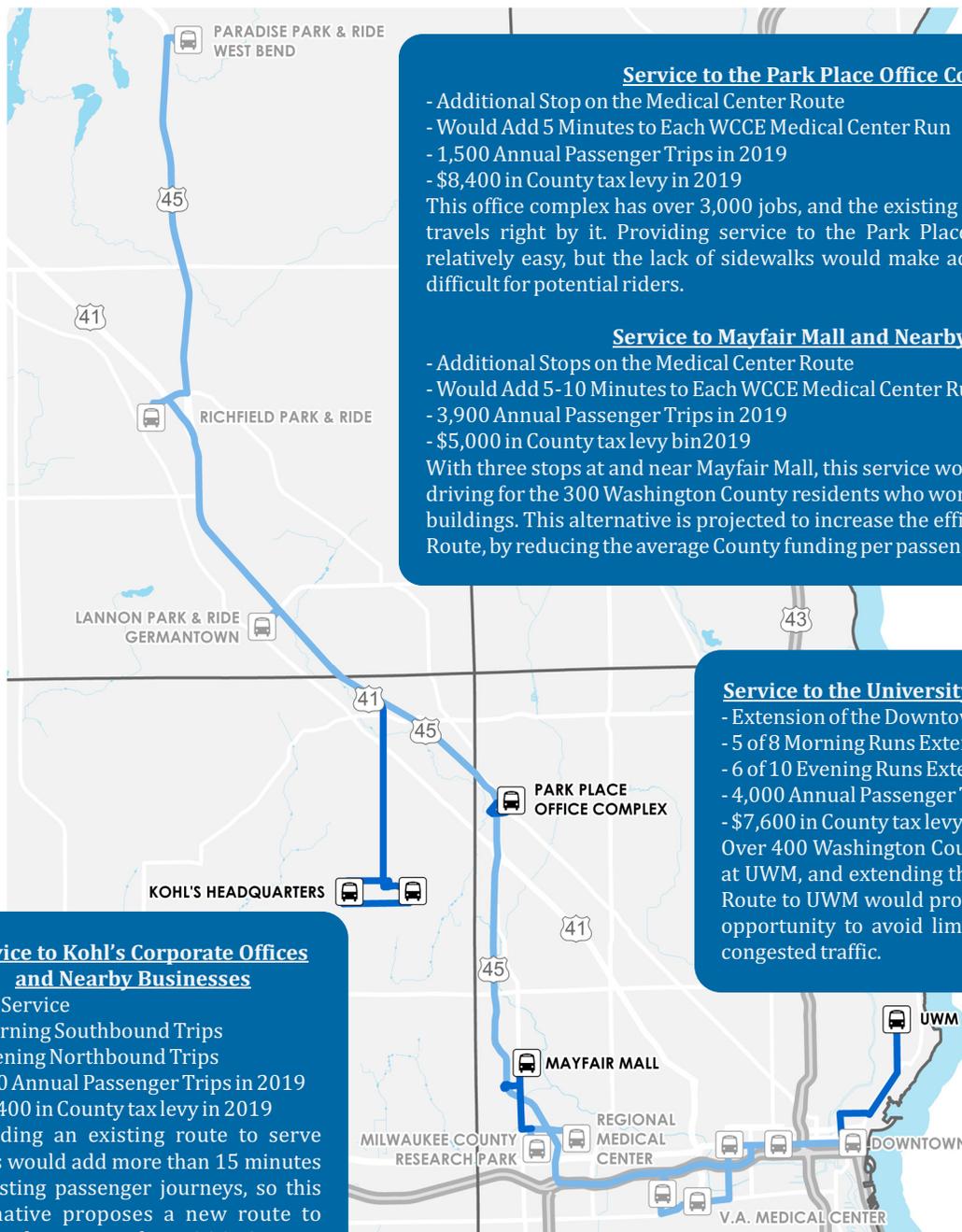
Characteristics	Actual	Projected		
	2012	2015	2019	Average
Service Provided				
Revenue Vehicle Miles	248,900	248,900	248,900	248,900
Revenue Vehicle Hours	9,300	9,300	9,300	9,300
Revenue Passenger Trips	127,500	119,200	116,400	117,700
Operating Expenses	\$1,276,700	\$1,354,800	\$1,466,500	\$1,410,100
Operating Revenues				
Farebox Revenues	\$423,800	\$397,800	\$440,300	\$419,000
Federal Assistance	\$266,600	\$260,800	\$282,300	\$271,400
State Assistance	\$426,900	\$484,300	\$524,300	\$504,100
County Assistance	\$159,400	\$211,900	\$219,600	\$215,600
Total Assistance	\$852,900	\$957,000	\$1,026,200	\$991,100

activity centers that are currently unserved by the WCCE, or are significant employment destinations near the path of the existing Medical Center Route, which has spare capacity for additional riders. All ridership projections and costs are estimates.

Service to General Mitchell International Airport

- New Service
- 10 Trips a Day, 7 Days a Week
- 20,800 Annual Passenger Trips in 2019
- \$403,600 in County tax levy in 2019

This alternative would connect Washington County residents to Mitchell Airport by bus, using the three park and ride lots currently served by the WCCE. In order for any bus service to the airport to attract passengers, it would need to provide them with frequent service so that they would not have to spend significant extra time at the airport, and so that they would be confident that they would be able to return home even if their return flight is late. Because of this unique requirement, bus trips would need to be provided at least 10 times a day, or every 1 to 2 hours.



Service to the Park Place Office Complex

- Additional Stop on the Medical Center Route
- Would Add 5 Minutes to Each WCCE Medical Center Run
- 1,500 Annual Passenger Trips in 2019
- \$8,400 in County tax levy in 2019

This office complex has over 3,000 jobs, and the existing WCCE Medical Center Route travels right by it. Providing service to the Park Place Office Complex would be relatively easy, but the lack of sidewalks would make accessing the office buildings difficult for potential riders.

Service to Mayfair Mall and Nearby Offices

- Additional Stops on the Medical Center Route
- Would Add 5-10 Minutes to Each WCCE Medical Center Run
- 3,900 Annual Passenger Trips in 2019
- \$5,000 in County tax levy in 2019

With three stops at and near Mayfair Mall, this service would provide an alternative to driving for the 300 Washington County residents who work in the mall or nearby office buildings. This alternative is projected to increase the efficiency of the Medical Center Route, by reducing the average County funding per passenger.

Service to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

- Extension of the Downtown Route
- 5 of 8 Morning Runs Extended
- 6 of 10 Evening Runs Extended
- 4,000 Annual Passenger Trips in 2019
- \$7,600 in County tax levy in 2019

Over 400 Washington County residents work or study at UWM, and extending the current WCCE Downtown Route to UWM would provide these residents with an opportunity to avoid limited parking and driving in congested traffic.

Service to Kohl's Corporate Offices and Nearby Businesses

- New Service
- 2 Morning Southbound Trips
- 3 Evening Northbound Trips
- 3,300 Annual Passenger Trips in 2019
- \$51,400 in County tax levy in 2019

Extending an existing route to serve Kohl's would add more than 15 minutes to existing passenger journeys, so this alternative proposes a new route to serve the more than 900 County residents who work at Kohl's Offices.

ADD A NEW ROUTE TO THE CITY OF FOND DU LAC

This alternative would connect West Bend and Kewaskum with Fond du Lac Transit at its downtown transfer zone, and provide direct service to UW-Fond du Lac, Marian College, Moraine Park Technical College, Winnebago Lutheran Academy, and St. Mary's Springs High School. It would be a new route, with one northbound morning run and two southbound evening runs. By providing a connection to Fond du Lac Transit, nearly all of the City would be accessible by transit from Washington County. This service is estimated to require \$52,400 in annual County funding in 2019, and generate about 4,000 annual passenger trips in 2019.

PROVIDE WCCE SERVICE FROM HARTFORD

Providing service from two leased park-and-ride lots along STH 60 in the City of Hartford and the Village of Slinger is estimated to generate between 90 and 110 additional passenger trips each day. This service could be provided in two ways: either a direct service to Downtown Milwaukee with four morning trips and four evening trips returning to Hartford, or a shuttle service that connects the proposed Hartford and Slinger park-and-ride lots to existing services at the Richfield Park-and-Ride using a timed transfer. The latter option would allow Hartford-area residents to

transfer to nearly every run on the existing Downtown and Medical Center Routes, and is expected to be the higher ridership option of the two. The shuttle option is estimated to have 27,100 annual revenue passengers but require only \$39,400 in County funds in 2019, compared to 22,200 annual revenue passengers and \$128,900 in 2019 for the direct service to downtown Milwaukee.

ADD REVERSE COMMUTE SERVICE TO THE WCCE

Two alternatives have been studied to connect Washington County businesses to labor from Milwaukee County. A local shuttle service connecting the end of the Milwaukee County Transit System BlueLine to the Germantown Industrial Park four times each morning and eight times each evening would provide access to 4,600 jobs, and could be expected to have about 11,400 annual passenger trips in 2019. This service would require about \$71,900 in County funding in 2019. Providing an express route along W. Fond du Lac Ave. to the Germantown Industrial Park and the City of West Bend would generate about 21,100 annual passenger trips by 2019. It would utilize some of the same vehicles as the existing WCCE Downtown Route, so its costs (\$106,400 in 2019) would not be significantly more than the local shuttle.

ALTERNATIVES FOR THE SHARED-RIDE TAXI

NO CHANGE ALTERNATIVE

If services remain unchanged until 2019, it is expected that ridership on the County's Shared-Ride Taxi service will be relatively flat, around the average of ridership between 2007 and 2012. Fares are assumed to rise with inflation, with \$0.25 increases in 2016 and 2019.

This alternative predicts that the County will have to contribute \$85,800 more in local tax levy to the Shared-Ride Taxi in 2019 than it did in 2012. Capital expenses would likely be manageable, assuming the County is able to continue utilizing Federal funds to provide an 80 percent match for vehicle purchases. An average of \$43,000 in

County property tax levy is expected to be needed to replace existing vehicles as they age. The table on this page displays further detail regarding expected operating revenues and expenses if no significant changes are made to the Shared-Ride Taxi service during the plan timeframe.

**PROJECTED ANNUAL OPERATING STATISTICS
FOR THE SHARED-RIDE TAXI NO CHANGE ALTERNATIVE**

Characteristics	Actual	Projected		
	2012	2015	2019	Average
Service Provided				
Revenue Vehicle Miles	1,258,900	1,258,900	1,258,900	1,258,900
Revenue Vehicle Hours	60,300	60,300	60,300	60,300
Revenue Passenger Trips	92,900	95,400	95,400	95,400
Operating Expenses	\$2,347,900	\$2,524,700	2,732,800	\$2,627,700
Operating Revenues				
Farebox Revenues	\$304,900	\$312,900	\$349,200	\$331,000
Federal Assistance	\$408,200	\$436,300	\$472,200	\$454,100
State Assistance	\$1,086,000	\$1,179,500	\$1,276,800	\$1,227,700
County Assistance	\$548,800	\$596,000	\$634,600	\$614,900
Total Assistance	\$2,043,000	\$2,211,800	\$2,383,600	\$2,296,700

RAISE FARES FASTER THAN INFLATION

If the County needs to reduce its level of assistance to the Shared-Ride Taxi service, it is limited to finding operational efficiencies or increasing fares. Because of the nature of a shared-ride taxi service, in which increased ridership results in a roughly proportional increase

in service miles and hours, the County would need to either discourage ridership, find operational efficiencies, or increase the percentage of overall expenses paid by passengers in order to lower the County's costs. To keep the level of County assistance at or below the level provided in 2012 (\$548,800), the County could increase fares an average of \$1.25 over the timeframe of the plan: by \$0.50 in 2015, and \$0.25 in 2017, 2018, and 2019. These fare increases are estimated to reduce ridership by 7,400 annual revenue passengers in 2019.



MERGE WITH THE CITY TAXI SERVICES

Due to uncertain State transit funding, the Cities of Hartford or West Bend may need to stop their service some time in the future. If this occurs, the County would need to decide if it wants to provide the existing on-demand service within Hartford and West Bend—requiring \$155,700 more County levy in 2019 than operating the existing system—or provide advanced-reservation service in both cities, like the remainder of the County receives currently—requiring an additional \$104,200 in County levy in 2019 compared to operating the existing system. Providing demand-response service within Hartford and West Bend would transfer the city taxis' 134,400 annual passengers to the County Shared-Ride Taxi, while providing uniform 24-hour advance reservation service across the entire County would add only 77,400 annual passengers to the County's service. Neither service is expected to initially affect the County's capital requirements, as the two cities would transfer ownership of their vehicles to the County, but as the vehicles age, replacing them would increase the County's capital expenses. A third option—providing demand-response service with a response time of about 30 minutes across the entire County—would cost significantly more, perhaps as much as \$800,000 more in County tax levy in 2019.

MERGE WITH THE OZAUKEE TAXI SERVICE

Merging the two county shared-ride taxi systems would provide improved service to the residents of each county, but would require creating a uniform fare policy and uniform service hours, as well as signing intergovernmental agreements detailing the funding and management of the system. An estimated 7,100 additional annual passenger trips on the merged shared-ride taxi service would require an additional \$46,500 in local support that

would need to be divided between the two counties. Merging the two systems may also result in longer average trips, which would increase the estimated cost of this alternative slightly.

OPERATE A SECONDARY TAXI DEPOT IN GERMANTOWN

Operating a secondary depot in or near Germantown is estimated to save the County approximately \$8,100 each year between 2015 and 2019, by reducing vehicle hours by 700. However, a number of potential additional capital and operating costs could offset much, if not all, of these savings, and further discussions between the County and its Shared-Ride Taxi operator would need to be conducted to determine where vehicles would be fueled, how maintenance would be managed, and how staffing would need to change. This alternative would not noticeably change the amount or quality of service provided to residents of Washington County.

EXTEND THE SHARED-RIDE TAXI SERVICE HOURS

Providing longer service hours, until 1 a.m. on Saturday and Sunday mornings, would offer an alternative to unsafe driving to patrons of dining and entertainment establishments and would provide County residents with more flexibility in their travel schedules. Requests for late-night service do not lend themselves to an advanced reservation service, so this alternative proposes that the County operate a demand-response service between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m. on those two days, with drivers available to respond to requests for service on short notice. This type of service is estimated to require \$12,300 in County funding in 2019. This alternative was already implemented by the County in 2014.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

In addition to the information presented in this newsletter, the plan website contains detailed information about the alternatives as well as other work completed to date for the plan. You can also submit comments or request a briefing by staff.

Kenneth R. Yunker, Executive Director
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
(262) 547-6721

Kevin Muhs, Senior Transportation Engineer
Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
(262) 953-4288

PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS ON ALTERNATIVES FOR THE WASHINGTON COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM

Please Join Us to Learn More and Provide Feedback!

Tuesday, March 4, 2014

5:30-7:30 pm

Cabela's of Richfield
One Cabela Way, Richfield

Wednesday, March 5, 2014

5:30-8:30 pm

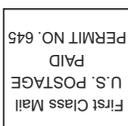
West Bend Community Library
630 Poplar Street, West Bend

Thursday, March 6, 2014

5:30-7:30 pm

Jack Russell Memorial Library
100 Park Avenue, Hartford

A short presentation will be given at 6 p.m. at each meeting. The meeting locations are wheelchair-accessible. Persons needing disability-related accommodations are asked to contact the SEWRPC office at (262) 547-6721 a minimum of three business days before the meetings so that appropriate arrangements can be made regarding access or mobility, review or interpretation of materials, active participation, or submission of comments.



SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
W239 N1812 ROCKWOOD DRIVE
PO BOX 1607
WAUKESHA, WISCONSIN 53187-1607