

**Minutes of Fifth Meeting**

**MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

DATE: September 19, 2008

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: Milwaukee County Transit System  
Administration Facility  
First Floor Conference Room  
1942 N. 17th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Committee Members Present

Peter W. Beitzel ..... Vice President, International Trade,  
Transportation, and Business Development, Metropolitan  
Milwaukee Association of Commerce  
Rodney A. Clark ..... Director, Bureau of Transit and Local Roads,  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Anita Gulotta-Connelly ..... Managing Director,  
Milwaukee County Transit System  
George Leutermann ..... Business and Training Director,  
(representing Leticia Keltz) United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc.  
Jeffrey S. Polenske ..... City Engineer, City of Milwaukee  
Don Natzke ..... Director, Milwaukee County  
Office for Persons with Disabilities  
Gary Portenier ..... Program Planning Coordinator,  
Milwaukee County Department on Aging  
LeAnn Minor ..... Legislative Director,  
(representing Richard Riley) Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 998  
Peggy Schulz ..... Citizen Member  
Nancy Senn ..... Transportation Planning Manager, Milwaukee County  
Department of Transportation and Public Works

Staff Present

Kenneth R. Yunker ..... Executive Director, Southeastern Wisconsin  
Regional Planning Commission  
Albert A. Beck ..... Principal Planner, Southeastern Wisconsin  
Regional Planning Commission  
Daniel A. Boehm ..... Director of Administration,  
Milwaukee County Transit System  
Monique Currie ..... Program Manager, Bureau of Transit, Local Roads,  
Railroads & Harbors, Wisconsin Department of Transportation  
Sonia Dubielzig ..... Planner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional  
Planning Commission  
Crystal DuPont ..... Program & Planning Analyst,  
Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Southeast Region  
Patricia Reikowski ..... Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Southeast Region  
Thomas V. Winter ..... Manager of Planning,  
Milwaukee County Transit System

## **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Yunker called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. He introduced himself and asked those present to introduce themselves. He indicated that roll call would be taken through the circulation of a sign-in sheet.

Mr. Yunker stated that Milwaukee County had asked the Commission to prepare a short-range transit system development plan for the Milwaukee County Transit System, and that the Commission staff was working with the County Department of Transportation and Public Works and transit system staffs on the plan. He noted that the study was looking at alternative transit service improvements and the funding needs of the existing system and the proposed improvements. He also indentified other efforts that were underway to identify, and propose possible solutions for, the local funding needs of the Milwaukee County Transit System and public transit in Wisconsin including efforts of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority (RTA), the Wisconsin Legislative Council Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority, and the Urban Economic Development Association (UEDA) of Wisconsin.

## **CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2007 MEETING**

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Natzke and seconded by Ms. Senn. During the discussion of the motion, Mr. Natzke stated that the name of his office had been revised to the "Milwaukee County Office for Persons with Disabilities." Mr. Yunker stated that the minutes would be corrected to reflect the new name. The motion to approve the minutes was carried unanimously by the Committee.

## **REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF CHAPTER VI, "TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ALTERNATIVES", OF SEWRPC COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PLANNING REPORT NO. 279, "MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2009-2013"**

Mr. Yunker noted that Chapter VI presented two alternative improvement plans for the transit system: one proposing an extensive set of service improvements that would provide for a 22 percent increase in service, and one proposing a more limited set of service improvements that would provide for a 15 percent increase in service. He summarized the routing and service changes proposed under these alternatives. He indicated that a third alternative calling for maintaining the existing system at 2008 service levels for comparison with the improvement alternatives was also included in the chapter along with the operating and capital funding needs of each alternative and a discussion of the need for dedicated local funding that identified two potential options for providing it. He led the Committee through a review of the chapter, asking for comments and questions from the Committee as he went through it. During the review, the following questions were raised and comments made by committee members:

1. Mr. Natzke noted that the express bus service operated by the transit system in the past had been overlaid on top of the existing local bus service but that the express bus service under Alternatives 1 and 2 was proposed to replace local bus service on the affected routes. He expressed concerns over the elimination of local service. Mr. Yunker stated that the past practice operating both express and local bus service over the same alignment was confusing to riders. Mr. Boehm agreed and indicated that riders would use whatever bus served the stop first without considering whether it was for the express or local route.

Mr. Yunker explained that by converting the local bus routes to express routes as proposed under Alternates 1 and 2, the express services could be operated at a much lower cost than the former express routes with underlying local bus service. He indicated that the proposed express service was really a blend of blend of local and express service and would be implemented by keeping the bus stops used by 75 to 80 percent of the existing riders on the local routes converted to express routes, resulting in express stop spacing of about one-quarter mile.

2. Mr. Natzke asked if the proposed operating headways on the express routes would be frequent enough to attract riders. Mr. Yunker responded that the proposed headways would be very reasonable with peak period service every 7 to 10 minutes as noted on page 5 of the chapter.
3. Mr. Polenske inquired about the impacts of the express service on the 20 to 25 percent of existing riders using stops other than those retained for the express service. Mr. Boehm responded that those passengers would face a slightly longer, but still reasonable—one additional block—walking distance to an express bus stop.
4. Mr. Natzke asked if consideration had been given to the possible effects that winter weather in combination with the wider stop spacing might have on express bus riders. Mr. Boehm stated that the wider stop spacing may present problems for some passengers due to snow and cold temperatures but cited a belief that most riders will accept walking a little further to a stop to use a faster bus service. Mr. Yunker indicated that public comments on the proposed express bus services received during the public informational meetings on the alternative improvement plans would provide important feedback regarding public acceptance and operational issues. Mr. Polenske suggested that the materials for the public meetings provide examples of how the express services might be implemented and the differences in express bus and local stop spacing.
5. Mr. Polenske stated that he thought the addition of express routes to the transit system was needed to increase operating speeds and reduce transit travel times. He also noted that the express bus services under the alternative were proposed to be developed largely by changing the stop spacing on the affected local bus routes. He believed that some of the enhancements identified for converting the express bus services to BRT service could also be applied for the proposed express bus service—including priority treatment at traffic signals to speed up operations, making minor changes in street design at bus stops, and using specially painted buses—and merited consideration in the implementing the initial express services. He suggested the first full paragraph on page 6 of the chapter be revised to indicate the express bus services may also include some of these enhancements. Mr. Yunker stated that text on page 6 would be revised to reflect Mr. Polenske's suggestions.

[Secretary's Note: The following text has been added to replace the last sentence in the first full paragraph on page 6 of the chapter:

“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—may be explored as the express routes are moved into implementation. Two projects that would implement BRT services closely following the alignments of express bus Routes 18/23X and 10/30X shown in Map 6-2 are currently under development by Milwaukee County.”]

6. Referring to the potential extensions of the express bus routes identified on Map 6-2, Mr. Polenske asked if the costs of the extensions had been included in the costs for Alternatives 1 and 2. Mr. Beck responded that no costs had been developed for the potential extensions. Mr. Yunker stated that staff would work on identifying the percent expansion in express service represented by the potential route extensions. Mr. Polenske also asked if it would also be possible to show or discuss a possible extension of the express bus service to General Mitchell International Airport. Mr. Yunker indicated that the Commission staff would work with Milwaukee County and transit system staffs to identify a potential express route serving the airport for inclusion in Alternatives 1 and 2.

[Secretary's Note: The following text was added as a new bullet after the second bullet on page 6 of the chapter:

“A possible fourth express bus route, also shown on Map 2, 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.”

A revised copy of Map 6-2 showing Route 11X is included in Attachment 1. Text was also added after the last sentence in the first full paragraph on page 7 of the chapter as follows:

“The potential express route extensions and the potential fourth express route serving the airport would add about 17 miles to the 40 miles of express route proposed under Alternatives 1 and 2, representing about a 43 percent increase in the total miles of proposed express route.”]

7. Mr. Clark noted that the text in the chapter identified the percentage increase in systemwide service levels over the 2008 budgeted service levels that would result from implementing the service improvements proposed under Alternatives 1 and 2. He suggested also comparing the systemwide service levels for those alternatives with the systemwide service levels in the year 2000, before the County started to make service cuts. Mr. Yunker stated that text making that comparison would be added to the chapter.

[Secretary's Note: The following text was added on page 4 as a second sentence in the first bullet under the description of Alternative 1:

“This service level would be about one percent below the 1,650,000 bus hours provided in the 2000, the year before the County started to reduce transit service.”

The following text has been added on page 9 as a second sentence in the first bullet under the description of Alternative 2:

“This service level would be about five percent below the 1,650,000 bus hours provided in the 2000, the year before the County started to reduce transit service.”]

There being no further discussion, a motion to approve the preliminary draft of Chapter VI, "Transit Service Improvement Alternatives," as amended, was made by Ms. Senn, seconded by Mr. Polenske, and carried unanimously by the Committee. Mr. Polenske stated he had approved the Chapter to allow the alternatives to be presented at public informational meetings and the public to comment on the service improvements.

## **REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF SECOND ISSUE OF THE SEWRPC NEWSLETTER FOR THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Mr. Yunker led the Committee through a review of the draft of the second Newsletter for the Milwaukee County Transit System Development Plan. He explained that the newsletter summarized the alternative service improvement plans which the Advisory Committee had just reviewed in Chapter VI. He stated that the draft Newsletter would be revised to reflect the changes to Chapter VI approved by the Advisory Committee. He noted that the Newsletter was not a small "brochure" as it needed to present information in sufficient detail to show that the current local funding for the transit system was not adequate for maintaining the existing system or for needed service improvements. The level of detail was needed to generate meaningful public comments on these topics.

The following questions were raised and comments made by committee members regarding the newsletter:

1. Mr. Leutermann suggested that a chart or table be provided in the Newsletter to summarize the major differences between the alternatives. Mr. Yunker and Ms. Dubielzig noted that Table 1 in the newsletter attempts to provide this information.
2. At the request of Mr. Boehm, Mr. Yunker summarized the work and major findings of the transit system development plan for Mr. Leutermann and Ms. Minor who were new to the Advisory Committee. He stated that staff would add a brief summary of the work of the Advisory Committee to date at the beginning of the Newsletter.

[Secretary's Note: The following new section of text was added on page 1 of the Newsletter after the first section:

### **"KEY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FINDINGS TO DATE**

The transit system development plan is being prepared by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission at the request of Milwaukee County and under the review of the Milwaukee County Transit Planning Advisory Committee appointed by Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker. The plan is needed to replace outdated plans completed in the late 1990s by Milwaukee County and transit system staffs. Work completed to date has included: identification of the current population, employment, and land use characteristics in Milwaukee County and the adjacent counties; a performance evaluation of transit system routes and route segments to identify areas of good and poor performance; an assessment of unmet transit travel needs for Milwaukee County residents; a comparison with other similar peer transit systems across the United States; and an analysis of the current and possible future financial condition of the transit system. The findings of this work are summarized in Newsletter 1 prepared under the study."]

3. Mr. Boehm commended the Commission staff on the discussion of the local funding needs of the transit system presented in the Newsletter. He indicated that staff had taken a complex issue and made it understandable.
4. Referring to the section on page 10 of the draft Newsletter discussing options for dedicated local transit funding, Mr. Yunker asked the Committee if it believed the vehicle sales tax option should be identified. Mr. Beitzel questioned the value of including it in the Newsletter, noting that the State Legislature had indicated that the proposal was "dead." Mr. Polenske and Mr. Natzke believed that it should be kept in the Newsletter as it was included in Chapter VI.

### **DISCUSSION OF DATES AND LOCATIONS FOR SECOND SERIES OF PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**

Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission would work with the County and transit system staffs to schedule the public informational meetings, probably in early 2009 with four meetings being desirable. He indicated staff would try to use the same locations as used in the first set of meetings held in the winter of 2007 including the Downtown Transit Center, HeartLove Place, the United Community Center, and the Zoofari Conference Center.

Mr. Leutermann stated that his organization (United Migrant Opportunity Services) had meeting rooms at two locations that could be used if needed. Mr. Yunker thanked Mr. Leutermann and indicated staff would look into those locations.

Mr. Natzke suggested having an additional meeting at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee or Marquette University. Mr. Yunker indicated it might be better to set up an informational kiosk or table in the student unions at the schools, or to get information on the plan and alternatives published in the student newspapers at each school.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Yunker stated that the Commission staff would schedule the next meeting of the Advisory Committee after staff had completed summarizing the comments made at the public informational meetings. He noted the comments would be published in a document similar to the one prepared for to summarize the comments received at the first set of public meetings in 2007. He indicated that staff would also try to have a draft of the report chapter presenting the final recommended transit service improvements ready for review at the next meeting.

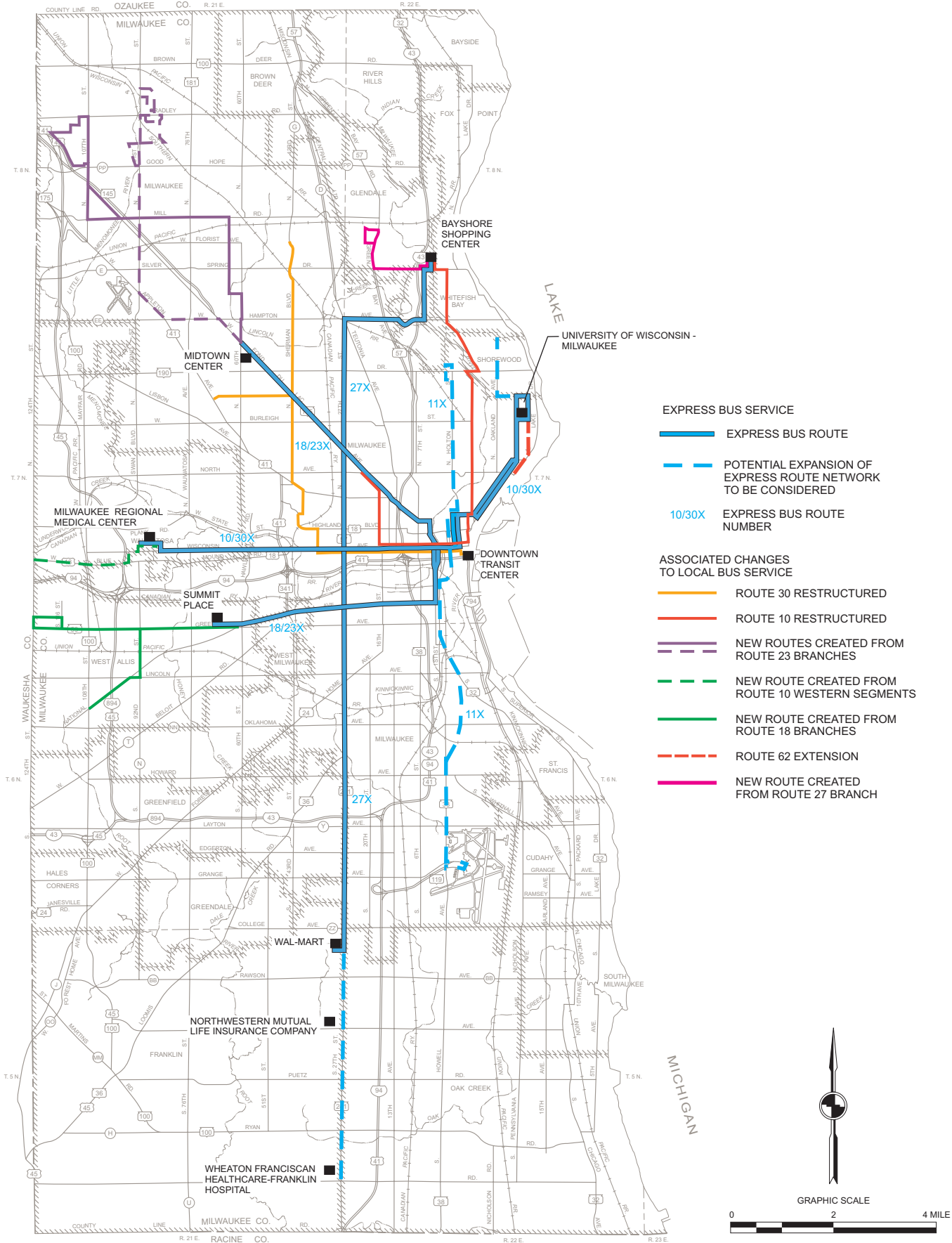
There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Albert A. Beck  
Acting Secretary

AAB/ab/rfm  
09/30/08  
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### EXPRESS BUS ROUTES FOR THE MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM PROPOSED UNDER ALTERNATIVES 1 AND 2



Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.