Milwaukee County Transit System
Short-Range (Five Year)
Development Plan

Recommended Five Year Transit System Development Plan

Introduction

Milwaukee County Transit System Development Plan

- A short-range (five year) transit service plan
- Addresses transit system routes, days and hours of service, and service frequency and speed
Introduction (continued)

Plan recommendations

- Restore and extend transit service throughout Milwaukee County
  - Reconnect to over 40,000 jobs no longer accessible by transit

- Extend transit hours of service on weekdays and weekends
  - Make transit more accessible to 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} shift workers

Plan recommendations (continued)

- Improve the frequency of transit service
  - Make transit service convenient and timely

- Improve the speed of transit service
  - Consider staged implementation of express service
Introduction (continued)

Cooperative staff effort

- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)
- Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS)
- Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works

Introduction (continued)

Transit Planning Advisory Committee directed and guided preparation of the plan

- Members appointed by the Milwaukee County Executive, including representatives from:
  - Transit-dependent populations, minority groups, and business associations
  - Wisconsin Department of Transportation
  - City and County Public Works Departments
  - Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
  - MCTS
**Introduction (continued)**

**Why Prepare the Plan?**

- To identify needed transit system improvement and expansion
- To identify the funding needed to maintain, and improve and expand, the transit system

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**Work Completed to Date**

**Transit system performance evaluation**

- Generally, good coverage of residential areas and job concentrations in Milwaukee County, but recent service reductions have significantly reduced coverage
- Buses run on-time more than 90% of the time
- Overcrowding is a problem on selected routes during peak periods
- Most local weekday routes have high ridership productivity/cost effectiveness
- MCTS generally outperformed 13 peer transit systems on measures of ridership and financial performance
Unmet Transit Service Needs

• Unserved Areas: existing routes do not serve some areas in the far west, south, northwest, and northeast portions of County

• Inadequate Service Hours: some bus routes (particularly on weekends) operate for less than 20 hours a day, not providing late night service which would meet the needs of 2nd and 3rd shift workers

• Inadequate Service Frequency: many bus routes operate with longer than desirable headways on weekdays (10 minute peak periods, 20 minute off-peak periods) and on weekends (30 minutes)

• Lengthy Travel Times: transit travel time is significantly longer than auto travel time for comparable trips

Potential High Priority Service Improvements Identified Based Upon Performance Evaluation, Unmet Needs Analysis and Public Comments:

• Extending routes to unserved areas

• Expanding weekday and weekend service hours

• Increasing the frequency of service on major local bus routes and freeway flyer routes

• Reducing transit travel times by adding express bus routes
Work Completed to Date (continued)

Status of Plan

• Early work on plan identified the funding crisis facing the transit system, concluding that dedicated funding would be essential just to preserve the current transit system.

• Staff postponed completion of a recommended plan, and worked with the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, Coalition for Advancing Transit, and community and business groups attempting to achieve transit dedicated funding State legislation.

• Dedicated transit funding State legislation was not enacted. There is a need to complete the plan to demonstrate the transit system which can be achieved with dedicated funding.

Recommended Plan: Proposed Service Plan

• 22 percent expansion in fixed-route service over five years to about 1,628,500 annual bus hours (about 4 percent annually – restores service to year 2000 levels)
  - New Routes and Route Extensions
  - Eliminate Bus Turn-backs on Major Routes
  - Extension of Service Hours
  - Increase Frequency of Bus Service
  - Freeway Flyer Service Expansion
  - Express Bus Service

• Maintain countywide Transit Plus paratransit service, increase service as needed to keep pace with ridership growth, monitor costs
**Recommended Plan: New Routes and Route Extensions**

Add New Local Routes and Adjust Alignments of Existing Local Bus Routes (see Map 1)

- Extend service to unserved/underserved areas
  - Development along Brown Deer Road
  - Industrial/office parks in Franklin and Oak Creek
  - Village of Hales Corners
- Better coverage in north-central and western portions of the County
- Restore service over routes which have been cut in recent years, including in 2010 budget
- Increase of about 64,000 bus hours annually—about 4 percent over the 1,327,500 bus hours for the bus system in 2010

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**Recommended Plan: Eliminate Bus Turn-backs**

Eliminate Bus Turn-back Points along Selected Routes (see Map 2)

- Schedules of some routes do not provide for the same service frequency over the entire length of the route
  - Where buses turn back before reaching terminus of route, less frequent service provided over ends of route
- Proposed change would provide consistent service levels over entire length of route
- Turn-backs proposed to be eliminated for Route Nos. 35, 57, and 64
- Increase of about 20,000 bus hours annually—about 1.5 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010
CHANGES TO LOCAL BUS ROUTES PROPOSED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

STREET WITH EXISTING LOCAL BUS ROUTE

PROPOSED NEW LOCAL BUS ROUTE

PROPOSED EXTENSION OF EXISTING LOCAL BUS ROUTE

PROPOSED RESTORATION OF SERVICE REDUCED OR ELIMINATED IN 2010 BUDGET

EXISTING ROUTE NUMBER

Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.
Map 2

LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENTS WHERE TURN-BACKS ARE PROPOSED TO BE ELIMINATED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.
**Recommended Plan: Expanded Hours of Service**

Expand Weekday and Weekend Hours of Service to Desirable Service Hours (see Map 3)

- Desirable to provide 20 hours of service over all routes—hours that cover most work shifts
  - Most local routes (25 of 30) provide this on weekdays; far less (14 of 30) on Saturdays, and (9 of 29) on Sundays
  - Expand service hours on weekdays and weekends on the 15 local routes with highest ridership (in addition to routes converted to express service)
  - Increase of about 13,000 bus hours annually—about one percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010

**Recommended Plan: Increased Service Frequency – Local Routes**

Provide Desirable Service Frequency on Local Routes (see Map 4)

- Desirable service frequency of no more than:
  - 10 minutes for weekday peak periods
  - 20 minutes for weekday off-peak periods
  - 30 minutes on weekends
  - Makes transit more convenient to use, attracts riders; only small area in County with this service
  - Increase weekday and weekend service frequency on 15 routes with highest ridership, in addition to routes converted to express service
  - Increase of about 118,000 bus hours annually—about 9 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010
Map 3

LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENTS WHERE SERVICE HOURS ARE PROPOSED TO BE EXPANDED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

WEEKDAYS

SATURDAYS

SUNDAYS

STREET WITH EXISTING LOCAL BUS ROUTE

LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENT AFFECTED BY PROPOSED EXPANDED SERVICE HOURS

ROUTE NUMBER

Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.
Map 4

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

WEEKDAYS

Saturdays

Sundays

Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.
**Recommended Plan: Increased Service Frequency – Freeway Flyer Service**

- Provide at least 10 bus trips over each route during both morning and afternoon peak periods each weekday
- Limit routes to serving no more than 2 park-ride lots; one new route required
- Increase service levels as needed to ensure that all passengers have a seat
- Add 2 midday round trips to each route
- Increase of about 32,000 bus hours annually—about 2 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010

**Recommended Plan: Express Bus Service**

Convert Local Bus Service to Express Bus Service in Three Corridors (see Map 5):

- **Over Route Nos. 10 and 30**
  - From Milwaukee Regional Medical Center to UWM using Wisconsin, Prospect, Farwell, Oakland, and Kenwood
- **Over Route Nos. 18 and 23**
  - From Summit Place to Midtown Center using Fond du Lac, McKinley, 2nd/3rd, National, and Greenfield
- **Over Route No. 27**
  - From Bayshore Town Center to Wal-Mart using Port Washington, Hampton, and 27th
EXPRESSION BUS ROUTES PROPOSED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

Local Bus Routes
- Route 10/30X
- Route 18/23X
- Route 27X

Potential Expansion of Express Routes to be Considered

Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.
Recommended Plan: Express Bus Service (continued)

- Potential to add fourth express route serving airport over the entire length of Route No. 11
- Conversion to express service would increase bus operating speed, decrease travel times
  - Eliminate some local bus stops; new stop spacing every quarter mile outside downtown
  - Keep stops used by about 80 percent of current passengers
- Express service to be provided 5:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m. seven days a week with frequent service:
  - 7-10 minutes for weekday peak periods
  - 9-16 minutes for weekday off-peak periods
  - 10-20 minute headways for weekends

Recommended Plan: Express Bus Service (continued)

- The local routes converted to express service among the top ridership routes of the system
- Local bus service retained over non-express portions of affected local routes through new or restructured routes
- Increase of about 54,000 bus hours annually—about 4 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010 budget
Recommended Plan: Potential for Express Bus to become BRT

Express bus service could be upgraded to bus rapid transit (BRT) service

- Potential enhancements for BRT 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
  - Specially designed bump-out bus stops with other passenger amenities
  - Conversion to BRT could also include route realignments, wider stop spacing, and some underlying local bus service

Recommended Plan: Potential for Express Bus to become BRT (continued)

- Two potential BRT routes have been identified
- Funding for Fondy-National BRT Route being pursued
Recommended Plan: Paratransit Service

Maintain Transit Plus Paratransit Service
- Keep countywide service area
- Increase service as needed to keep pace with ridership growth

Continue recent efforts to promote use of accessible fixed-route bus service
- Provide travel training
- Make improvements to enhance accessibility of bus stops
  - Curb-cuts, concrete pads, shelters, or benches.

Benefits of Implementing Recommended Plan

Benefits of Improved and Expanded Service in the Recommended Plan:
- Provide transit accessibility throughout Milwaukee County
  - Reconnect with transit service over 40,000 jobs
  - Provide service for workers with second and third shift jobs
- Provide faster and more convenient service for existing riders, and attract new riders
  - Reduced wait times for buses
  - Higher speed express bus service
Benefits of Implementing Recommended Plan (continued)

• Improved service (reduced wait times, higher speed express bus service) will help attract new transit users
  • Reduce highway traffic and congestion
  • Improve air quality
  • Reduce energy consumption
  • Enhance quality of life by reducing household expenditures on transportation

• Improved service (reduced wait times, higher speed express bus service) will better meet the travel needs of the significant portion of the County population without access to an automobile
  • 16% of total population without access to an automobile
  • 28% of minority population without access to an automobile

Benefits of Implementing Recommended Plan (continued)

• Improved public transit service will make Milwaukee County – a metropolitan area with higher density – more attractive for residents and businesses

• Improved public transit will provide a necessary and desirable alternative in the County’s most heavily traveled corridors and areas

• Improved public transit is essential to County economic development
Need for Dedicated Funding

Analysis of capital and operating funding clearly indicates that current property tax levy would be inadequate to improve and expand the system.

Proposed 0.5% sales tax in Milwaukee County would be sufficient to address a backlog of bus replacement needs and implement the recommended plan, expanding transit service by over 20%, restoring recent service cuts and greatly improving the extent, speed, and convenience of transit service:

- 0.5% sales tax was identified as the preferred funding source by “temporary” and “limited authority” Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority
- 1.0% sales tax increase for transit, parks, and public safety approved by Milwaukee County electorate in advisory referendum in November 2008

Need for Dedicated Funding (continued)

Recent 0.5% sales tax proposals:

- Governor proposed regional transit authority legislation in the 2009-11 State budget, authorizing a 0.5% sales tax for transit in southeastern Wisconsin
- State Legislature rejected Governor’s proposal, separately proposing a KRM commuter rail authority and Milwaukee County transit authority
- Governor vetoed Milwaukee County authority, but kept the KRM commuter rail authority, which is now the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SERTA)
- In April 2010, another attempt to attain dedicated funding was made, but proposed legislation was not passed by the State Legislature
Need for Dedicated Funding (continued)

- Without dedicated local transit funding,
  - Continued reductions in transit service will be implemented
  - Continued increases in transit fares well above the rate of general price inflation will be implemented
  - Need to replace up to 198 buses over the next few years could result in the need for significant reductions in transit service
    - Reduction could be as high as 25 to 35 percent if all 198 buses need to be replaced
    - Number of buses to be replaced will depend on if the fleet is reduced by future service reductions

Availability of Dedicated Local Transit Funding to Transit Systems in Similar-sized Metropolitan Areas

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<th>Name</th>
<th>2000 Population (in millions)</th>
<th>Source of Local Dedicated Funding</th>
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<td>Denver, CO</td>
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