

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
INTEROFFICE COMMUNICATION**

**DATE:** September 27, 2017

**TO:** Michael Mayo, Sr., Chair, Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee

**FROM:** James H. Martin, Interim Director, Department of Transportation  
Holly Davis, Director, Department on Aging  
Geri L. Lyday, Administrator, DHHS Disabilities Services Division

**SUBJECT:** Proposed change to the Milwaukee County Transit System Reduced Fare Program

POLICY

This report is for informational purposes only.

BACKGROUND

This report is being submitted to follow up the September 2017 Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee meeting request to provide additional information in response to a proposed resolution from the County Board Chair, authorizing and requesting the Disability Resource Center (DRC) of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Aging Resource Center (ARC) of the Department on Aging begin processing applications for the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) Reduced Fare Program.

Having successfully completed the transition to processing GO Pass applications at the DRC and ARC in June 2017, it has become evident that individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria for the program and may be eligible for the Reduced Fare Program, would benefit from being able to apply for and receive a reduced fare card at the ARC/DRC.

REDUCED FARE PROGRAM

The MCTS Reduced Fare Program is consistent with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations that require riders age 65 and over, or riders with a qualifying disability to ride transit at a reduced rate during off-peak hours. The categories for eligibility are:

- 1) Age 65 years or older or,
- 2) If currently covered under Medicare or,
- 3) It there is a "qualifying physical or mental impairment"

The MCTS Reduced Fare Program differs from the GO Pass Program in two distinct ways:

- a) MCTS reduced fare is also available to children, ages 6 to 11
- b) MCTS reduced fare program does not require a 'fiscal means test'

If an adult is not eligible for GO Pass, the ARC/DRC has been referring them to MCTS to seek a reduced fare card. The application process is as follows:

- Complete an application form at MCTS or in advance (available online at RideMCTS.com)
- Present the required documentation for an eligibility determination

MCTS is typically able to issue a reduced fare card that same day enabling eligible individuals to ride MCTS buses for one-half the full fare or \$1.10. At present, MCTS is processing 12 to 20 reduced fare applications per day.

#### PROCESSING REDUCED FARE APPLICATIONS AT THE ARC AND DRC

Prior to beginning to process reduced fare applications at the ARC/DRC, details regarding technology considerations need to be verified to confirm that no additional costs or obstacles to implementation are present and ARC/DRC staff will need training in the reduced fare application process. MCTS is prepared to assist ARC/DRC in processing reduced fare applications for those individuals who are already being seen for GO Pass to help provide a “one-stop shop” option for individuals who are elderly or have special needs. After the ARC/DRC gain some experience with processing reduced fare cards, MCTS and the Resource Centers will also explore the benefits of a single location for all Reduced Fare Program applications if practicable, in light of the costs associated with duplicating the process in two locations that are about one mile apart.

#### GO PASS UPDATE

Changes to the GO Pass program were fully implemented in June 2017. The joint efforts of the Resource Centers and MCTS resulted in a highly successful implementation as shown below.

- From June 26, 2017 (the first day for charging \$1 per day for GO Pass) through the end of August 2017, errors occurred in a fraction of 1% of GO Pass transactions. GO Pass customers experienced improper charges 833 times out of 709,990 rides, which is a total percentage of 0.12% of all GO Pass rides. **Conclusion: Of all GO Pass taps on board MCTS buses, errors only occurred .12% of the time.**
- Out of those errors, less than 250 individuals were impacted out of a pool of about 16,000 GO Pass holders. Some passengers experienced problems 10, 20 or even 30 times indicating that user error is a contributing factor.
- **Conclusion: Out of all GO Pass users, 1.6% were affected by onboard issues with their GO Pass.**
- Since the GO Pass changes were implemented, there has not been a significant decrease in the on-time performance of buses. Data indicates that while some individual GO Pass transactions can be time consuming, these transactions have not significantly impacted system operations and overall on-time performance (please see Figure 1 below).

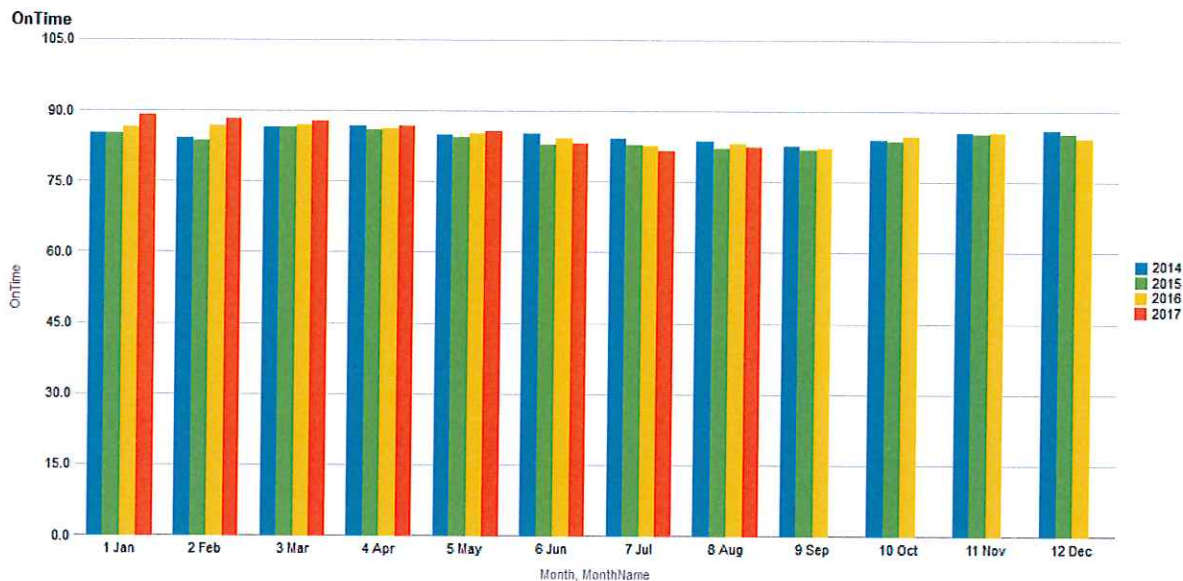


Figure 1: Percentage of on-time performance bus routes for years 2014 to 2017.

Finally, it should be noted that GO Pass individuals being seen at the Resource Center thus far, have frequently received additional needed services, which strongly supports the usefulness and efficiency of incorporating the special needs transportation programs into the ARC/DRC to help accomplish their core mission.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for information purposes only.

Prepared by: Dan Boehm, Managing Director, MCTS

Approved by:

James H. Martin, Interim Director, Department of Transportation

- cc: Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Executive
- Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors
- Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Executive
- Chris Abele
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors