

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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MEMORANDUM

IMPROVING COORDINATION WITH THE OZAUKEE COUNTY SHARED-RIDE TAXI AND POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO ROUTE 17

At the May 2017 meeting of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors' Transportation, Public Works, and Transit Committee, the Committee received a presentation from the Public Policy Forum summarizing the Forum's study on improving transportation connections to job centers in the Region, titled, *The Last Mile: Connecting Workers to Places of Employment*. In response, the Committee adopted a resolution that included a request that the Commission staff prepare a report discussing potential additional desirable locations and routes where transfers could occur between the Ozaukee County Shared-Ride Taxi service and Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) fixed-route services, and discussing potential modifications to MCTS Route 17 so that residents living north, east, and west of the Menomonee Valley would have better access to jobs in the Valley.

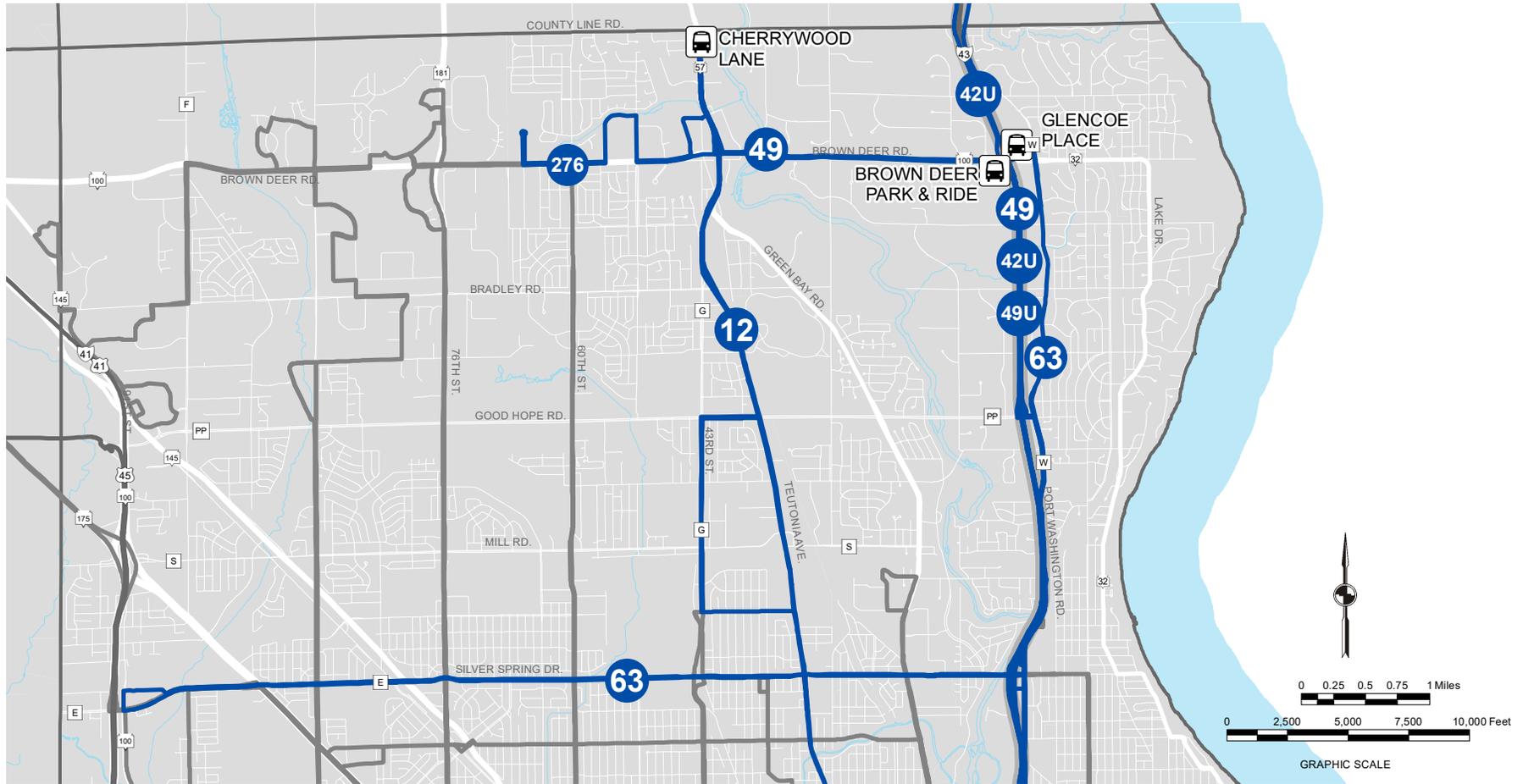
As requested in the resolution, this memorandum includes estimates of the operating costs associated with potential modifications to Route 17. These estimates, produced by Commission staff, are intended to allow comparison of the different modifications discussed below, but may not adequately consider all of the costs associated with expanding or reducing MCTS service. MCTS staff would be able to provide more accurate cost estimates should the County decide to pursue any of these service modifications.

CONNECTING TO THE OZAUKEE COUNTY SHARED-RIDE TAXI

For more than 20 years, Ozaukee County has provided a county-wide Shared-Ride Taxi service open to all members of the general public. The Shared-Ride Taxi provides point-to-point service, picking riders up anywhere within Ozaukee County and dropping them off anywhere within Ozaukee County. On January 1, 2017, the Shared-Ride Taxi's service area was extended to better connect businesses in Ozaukee County with Milwaukee County's workforce. As shown on Map 1, riders can now transfer between MCTS services and the Shared-Ride Taxi at the end of W. Glencoe Place (near N. Port Washington Road and served by Route 63), the Brown Deer Road Park & Ride (served by Route 49), and W. Cherrywood Lane and N. Green Bay Road (served by Route 12, Route 49, and Route 276).

Route 12 and Route 63 provide relatively good service to sections of Milwaukee County that are experiencing higher unemployment and underemployment than much of the County. However, additional transfer locations along key MCTS routes could further improve access to employment opportunities for Milwaukee County residents who need work. The existing transfer points provide a one-transfer ride from neighborhoods along nearly the entirety of Silver Spring Drive and Teutonia Avenue in the County. Additional neighborhoods could be similarly served with the addition of a transfer point at W. Brown Deer Road and N. Servite Drive (near the former Northridge Mall and served by Route 67 and Route 76) and the addition of a transfer point at Bayshore Town Center (served by the GreenLine, Route 14, and Route 15).

TRANSFER POINTS BETWEEN MCTS AND OZAUKEE COUNTY SHARED-RIDE TAXI SERVICES



— MCTS ROUTE CONNECTED TO TRANSFER POINT (ROUTES 12, 42U, 49U, 49, 63, AND 276)

— OTHER MCTS ROUTE



TRANSFER POINT BETWEEN MCTS AND OZAUKEE COUNTY SHARED-RIDE TAXI SERVICES

The potential transfer point near Northridge would provide improved access to Ozaukee County employers for neighborhoods along N. 60th Street and N. 76th Street. It also would not be significantly further south of the Milwaukee County-Ozaukee County line than the existing transfer points, making it relatively likely that Ozaukee County might consider adding this additional transfer point to its services. A transfer point at Bayshore Town Center would provide improved access to Ozaukee County employment opportunities for numerous neighborhoods east of I-43, but may be too far south for Ozaukee County to consider extending the Shared-Ride Taxi service, at least initially.

Ozaukee County is currently studying its transit system to determine what changes, if any, should be made to their Shared-Ride Taxi and Express services. As part of that planning process, Ozaukee County is exploring modifications to the Shared-Ride Taxi service that would enable the service to better provide access to employment opportunities. Currently, an individual transferring to or from MCTS at one of the existing transfer location must pay the full fare for the Taxi service (on top of the fare they already paid for MCTS). The full fare for the Shared-Ride Taxi varies from \$2.50 to \$6.75, depending on passenger type and distance traveled. In addition, because the Taxi is an advance reservation service (not on-demand), people who would like to transfer from MCTS to access a job in Ozaukee County may need to call at least 24 hours in advance of their trip. Ozaukee County's current policy is that riders may need to wait up to 30 minutes from their scheduled pick up time for the Shared-Ride Taxi to arrive. Methods to improve the Taxi service for employment trips—including discounted fares for people transferring from MCTS services at these transfer locations and analyzing ways to reduce the potential wait time for someone transferring from an MCTS service—are being studied as part of the planning process, and recommendations will be made to the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors regarding changes in policy and operations that may improve the Taxi service. To maximize the usefulness of the Shared-Ride Taxi for employment trips, these current service attributes may need to be modified.

Implementing one or both of the transfer points discussed previously would require the assistance of Ozaukee County staff and the agreement of the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors. Commission staff would suggest that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors write a letter to the Ozaukee County Board of Supervisors requesting that Ozaukee County consider adding the additional transfer locations to their Shared-Ride Taxi service. In addition, the existing transfer locations and any locations added by Ozaukee County could be noted on the MCTS system map and individual route maps upon their next revision. MCTS currently notes the existing transfer locations on individual route schedules and announces the transfer locations onboard the buses through the stop annunciator system.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO ROUTE 17

MCTS's Route 17 connects the Menomonee Valley to the Near South Side by providing service along W. Canal Street, S. Cesar Chavez Drive, and W. Mitchell Street. Direct transfers from a number of bus routes (including the BlueLine, GreenLine, Route 14, Route 15, Route 19, Route 23, Route 52, Route 54, Route 56, and Route 80) provide some access to the Valley from the southern and eastern portions of the County, although residents from west of S. Cesar Chavez Drive and north of W. Canal Street must generally travel past the Valley to transfer to Route 17.

In Fall 2016, Route 17 provided approximately 100 rides on the average weekday, with an average performance of 9.3 passengers per bus hour per trip. Trips are currently provided between 3:30 a.m. and 7:30 a.m., 12:45 p.m. and 5:10 p.m., and 10:15 p.m. and 1 a.m. on weekdays, with slightly more limited hours on Saturday and Sundays. Fifteen trips in each direction are provided on weekdays, 10 trips are provided on Saturdays, and eight trips are provided on Sundays.

Changes to Run Times

Based on data from Fall 2016 and input received by Commission staff from the Menomonee Valley Partners (MVP), there is room to modify the run times on Route 17 to better serve the existing businesses in the Valley. MVP indicated that some of the existing run times may have originally been intended to serve the shift times of the Cargill plant that closed near the end of 2014, and therefore those runs may not be needed anymore. Data from MCTS indicates that the 12:07 a.m. westbound run and the 12:25 a.m. eastbound run are not regularly used, and,

therefore, could be considered for elimination or a change in time. Eliminating this roundtrip run would be expected to reduce MCTS operating expenses by approximately \$15,000 annually.

MVP is currently working with businesses in the Valley to comprehensively address the workforce transportation challenges the businesses are facing. The Public Policy Forum's report was partially prepared in this context, and as indicated in that report and verified by Commission staff, businesses in the Valley have been indicating to MVP that providing Route 17 runs that serve traditional first shift work times would likely be a worthwhile improvement to Route 17. Providing adequate weekday service to first shift work times would likely require adding three roundtrip runs that reach the Valley between 7:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and adding two roundtrip runs in the evening that leave the Valley between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. The additional annual operating expenses that would be incurred if MCTS would implement these five additional roundtrip runs is estimated to be approximately \$102,000, not including any savings from eliminating the run discussed previously.

Additional changes to run times may be warranted, but the results of MVP's work with businesses in the Valley regarding transportation should be developed before additional actions are taken. MVP's review of transportation services in the Valley may identify ways that run times on Route 17 could be further improved to better serve the Valley's businesses and their employees.

Changes to Routing

The County Board resolution and Public Policy Forum report both mentioned the limited access to the Valley via transit from areas other than the Near South Side. Improving connectivity to the Valley from the north, east, and west using transit does not have an obvious solution, and is challenged by the presence of I-94 along the Valley's northern edge, the lack of street connections between the Valley floor and the surrounding neighborhoods, and the significant elevation difference between the Valley and surrounding areas. To the north, the only access points to the Valley floor are at N. 44th Court, N. 32nd Street, and N. 25th Street, while western access is challenged by the uncertainty introduced by traffic delays associated with the approximately 80 Milwaukee Brewers home games that occur each year.

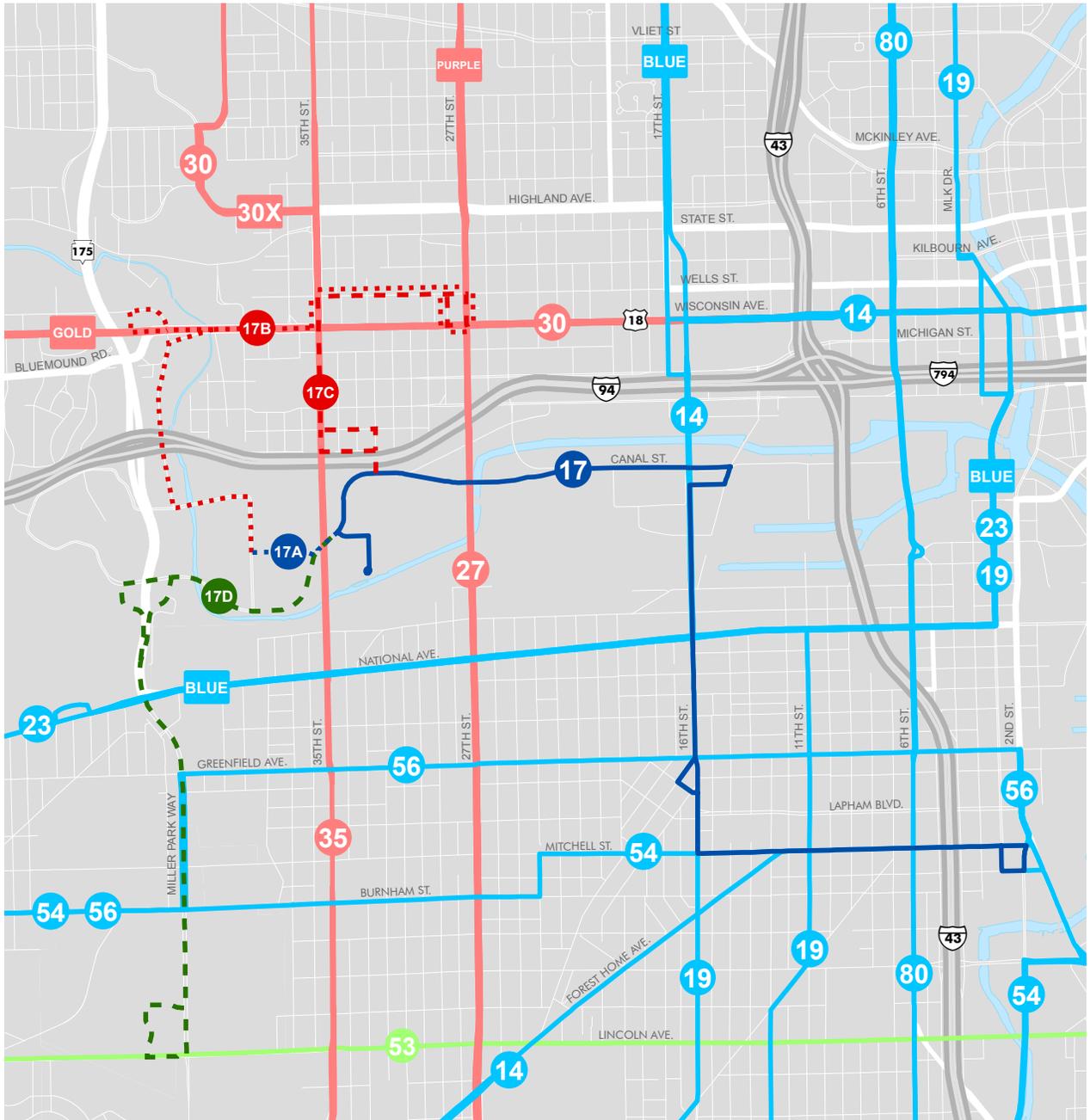
These challenges are further accentuated by the lack of street grid within the Valley, and for the purposes of fixed-route transit, the significant stretches of the Valley that do not have clusters of employers. Major employment clusters that could be served by Route 17 are largely located around W. Canal Street and N. 35th Street, and W. Canal Street near N. Emmber Lane and N. 16th Street. West St. Paul Avenue has nearly continuous development along the street between N. 25th Street and N. 12th Street, but it is characterized by many smaller employers, and because of the poor connectivity within the Valley's street grid, would likely need to be served by a completely separate transit route to provide robust access to those employers.

Map 2 shows the existing Route 17 and four potential extensions of Route 17 (labelled 17A through 17D), three of which focus on increasing connectivity between the Valley and areas to the west, north, or east. The current Route 17 provides direct connections (during the times it runs) to the near South Side, and strong transfer connections to areas to the south and southeast of the Valley. Residents could also reasonably travel from some areas southwest and northeast of the Valley (on Route 14) without doubling back a significant distance to access employment opportunities in the Valley. Additional transfer connections that currently provide access to the southwest and northeast require circuitous travel paths for residents, and are likely unattractive to potential riders.

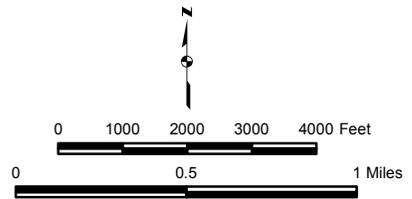
Potential Extension 17A

As shown on Map 1, extension 17A is a short extension of Route 17 to serve businesses located west of the N. 35th Street viaduct, including Ingeteam, Charter Wire, and Badger Railing. This extension would be a relatively easy improvement, providing service on W. Milwaukee Road, and looking back via Wheelhouse Road or Canal Street. A version of this extension was previously operated on a couple Route 17 trips per day to serve Badger Railing, but was eliminated in 2016 after demand declined. Before this extension—perhaps with additional stops serving other businesses west of N. 35th Street—is implemented, MCTS and MVP staff would need to coordinate to determine if new shift time data being collected by MVP indicates that it would attract riders. It is important to note that routing options for this extension are likely to be limited by the use of Selig Drive to access Miller Park

MAP 2 EXISTING MCTS ROUTE 17 AND POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS



-  EXISTING ROUTE 17
-  POSSIBLE ROUTE 17 EXTENSIONS
-  POSSIBLE ROUTE 17 EXTENSIONS
-  POSSIBLE ROUTE 17 EXTENSIONS
-  MCTS ROUTE CONNECTED TO ROUTE 17
-  MCTS ROUTE CONNECTED TO ROUTE 17 EXTENSION B OR C
-  MCTS ROUTE CONNECTED TO ROUTE 17 EXTENSION D



Source: SEWRPC

on Brewers' game days. Adding this extension to Route 17 would cost up to \$50,000 per year, if the extension is added to every trip, including the 5 additional first shift round trips discussed previously.

Potential Extensions 17B and 17C

Two potential paths to directly connect the Valley to adjacent neighborhoods to the north are shown on Map 1, and are labeled 17B and 17C. These options would also provide good transfer connections to areas further to the north, and to some areas northwest and northeast of the Valley as well. Both potential routings would provide improved access to the Valley for residents of the Near West Side, and would provide direct transfers to some of the transit system's most frequent and highly utilized routes, such as the PurpleLine, the GoldLine, Route 27, Route 30, Route 30X, and Route 35.

Buses traveling on extension 17B would travel on Selig Drive to N. 44th Street, and then access W. Wisconsin Avenue via either W. Bluemound Road or N 45th Place (depending on the direction of travel). Buses would travel on W. Wisconsin Avenue and W. Wells Street as far east as N. 27th Street, providing stops in the neighborhood and at the transfer points on N. 35th Street and N. 27th Street. Extension 17B would provide the most direct routing in the Valley, reducing the amount of looping and doubling-back for buses operating an extended Route 17. However, roadway closures and traffic related to Brewers' games would likely impact this option, and the combination of relatively steep grades and narrow streets may make this alternative untenable for a 40-foot bus. If this alternative is possible to operate with MCTS' current equipment, it would cost an estimated \$250,000 annually to operate, on top of the \$50,000 associated with operating extension 17A. This cost estimate includes providing service on this extension for the five additional first shift trips discussed previously.

Buses traveling on extension 17C would travel on N. 32nd Street, and access N. 35th Street via either W. Mt Vernon Avenue or W. Park Hill Avenue (depending on the direction of travel). They would travel on W. Wells Street between N. 35th Street and N. 27th Street. Including extension 17C in a modified Route 17 would require the buses to double-back after serving Palermo's and Rexnord (Falk), perhaps creating a more confusing route for passengers. Similar to 17B, 17C would also have some tight turns, narrow streets, and steep grades, although each of these appear to be less extreme than under 17B. 17C would have a more direct route after leaving the Valley and would avoid traffic related to Brewers games, but would introduce occasional bus service onto a few blocks of residential streets that do not currently have buses traveling on them. Extension 17C appears to be more likely to be operable for a 40-foot bus than 17B, although it still may not be operable by a standard MCTS bus. Commission staff estimate that operating 17C would cost \$250,000 a year. This cost estimate includes providing service on this extension for the five additional first shift trips discussed previously.

Potential Extensions 17D

Extension 17D would predominately improve access from the west and southwest of the Valley, by continuing Route 17 along W. Canal Street to Miller Park Way, and traveling on Miller Park Way to W. Lincoln Avenue. In addition to improving access to the Valley, this extension would greatly increase the number of jobs accessible via Route 17, and serve a strong retail corridor in the County that currently has limited or no transit service. The roadways suggested for this alternative would not pose a challenge for transit vehicles, although the extension may be difficult to operate on time before and after some highly attended Brewers games, when W. Canal Street can become blocked by cars waiting to enter Miller Park. Commission staff estimate that operating 17D would cost \$250,000 a year. This cost estimate includes providing service on this extension for the five additional first shift trips discussed previously.

Other Improvements and Considerations

It is important to note that any modifications to Route 17 discussed in this memorandum should not be expected to significantly improve the performance of the route, due to the previously discussed issues regarding the Valley's vertical and horizontal separation from nearby neighborhoods, lack of a street grid, and lack of density. However, as previously mentioned, MVP is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the workforce transportation needs of businesses in the Valley. The results of this effort will likely provide information that could lead to improvements on Route 17, as well as shed light on the other specific transportation improvements that may be needed to help solve transportation access issues in the Valley. These other improvements may take the form of less conventional transportation solutions than Route 17.

It may make sense for any modifications to Route 17 to be delayed until the results of MVP's review are available, which is expected late this coming winter. The results of this review may generate discussions with businesses in the Valley and residents of surrounding neighborhoods regarding a number of improvements to transportation services in and around the Valley. Depending on resident and business feedback, these discussions could result in MVP working with MCTS and the County to dramatically change Route 17, including replacing the route with a shuttle service or on-demand service operated by smaller vehicles. Route 17 may also need to be further modified in response to other changes in the Valley, including potential investments in vertical circulation improvements from the viaducts to the Valley floor or other last mile initiatives.

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