

County of Milwaukee
Interoffice Communication

DATE: 4/22/2019
TO: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: Report on Efforts to Secure Funds to Continue Route 57 in Waukesha County

POLICY

The adopted 2019 Transit budget included an appropriation of \$661,939 to allow bus Route 57 to continue to provide service into Waukesha County to help connect people to jobs as a designated JobLines route through August 2019. The budget also required that the Director of Transportation, working in conjunction with the Managing Director of MCTS and Governmental Affairs staff, provide a report to the County Board no later than the July 2019 meeting cycle on efforts to secure a non-tax levy source of funds to continue the service into Waukesha County after August 2019.

BACKGROUND

Recall that Bus Route 61 (Appleton – Keefe) provided service to Menomonee Falls until that service was replaced with an extension of Route 57 (Walnut – Appleton) earlier this year. (See the map that accompanies this report).

The adopted 2019 Transit budget also states that:

It is the policy of Milwaukee County to seek additional State funding to allow the transit service between Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties to continue after August 2019. The State paid more than \$13 million to help settle a lawsuit that, among other things, alleged the Zoo Interchange Expansion Project discriminated against communities of color by not including public transit improvements. Governmental Affairs staff will communicate to State policymakers the need for non-tax levy funding to continue inter-county transit service to connect workers with jobs.

In addition, Government Affairs staff shall discuss with Waukesha County officials potential opportunities to share in the cost of providing this transit service. Government Affairs staff shall also engage groups supportive of the JobLines including, but not limited to, the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin (BHCW) and the Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH), in the effort to secure funding to continue the service. Governmental Affairs staff shall also communicate with groups such as the Regional Transit Leadership Council that are dedicated to advancing regional transit through public-private partnership.

The Director, Department of Transportation, discussed the aforementioned policy with Government Affairs staff and emphasized urgency for obtaining a commitment from non-Milwaukee County parties to provide funding necessary to continue the route beyond August 2019.

Waukesha County Declined to Participate in Funding

The Director, Department of Transportation also explored opportunities with Waukesha County to enter a cost-sharing agreement with Milwaukee County for purposes of continuing the route. The Waukesha County Director of Public Works (DPW) declined to recommend such an agreement to the Waukesha County Board of Supervisors. The decision by Waukesha County's DPW Director was driven by consideration of ridership and route productivity. The portion of Route 57 that is entirely within Waukesha

County currently produces about 162 rides per day, and the productivity of this portion of the route is 4.2 passengers per revenue hour. Although this is a slight increase in rides and productivity since last autumn it is still less than half of the threshold amount that Waukesha County considers enough for a recommendation that a transit service be funded, which is 10 passengers per revenue hour.

MCTS Cannot Afford to Continue the Route in 2019

MCTS evaluated its actual expense to budget position year-to-date to determine whether there existed potential for surplus sufficient to continue operating Route 57 to Menomonee Falls after August 2019. The MCTS Chief Financial Officer was not able to predict a surplus and instead has expressed concern about passenger revenue not tracking as high as is budgeted.

Consistent with the adopted budget language, MCTS is preparing to sunset service to Menomonee Falls after August 2019, since additional funding has not been secured to continue the service beyond that date, and transit system schedule writers need about three (3) months of lead time to prepare for a change as significant as shortening a bus route.

MCTS Passengers and Transit Plus Passengers will be Notified of the Change

MCTS will make passengers aware of the changes to Route 57 by updating online information, printing new bus schedules, placing notices on Route 57 buses in Waukesha County, and hanging appropriate signage at affected bus stops in Waukesha County.

Transit Plus, the Milwaukee County paratransit office, will also notify about 160 others that occasionally used Transit Plus to reach destinations in Waukesha County that they will have to redirect their trip-making to destinations within Milwaukee County. Transit Plus will make direct phone contact with any clients who are consistently scheduled trips to Waukesha County. For example, one rider regularly visited the Marcus Menomonee Falls movie theater. This individual will be referred to alternative movie theaters within Milwaukee County. In addition, a letter will be sent to all impacted clients who actively used the paratransit service in 2019 to let them know that the service will be ending in August.

FISCAL EFFECT

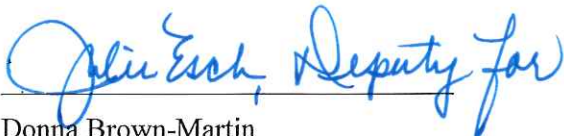
There is no fiscal impact of the service modifications. The appropriation for this service in the adopted 2019 transit budget covered eight (8) months of service. Costs will not increase or decrease as a result of this change, which is consistent with the adopted 2019 transit budget.

RECOMMENDATION

A non-tax levy source of funding has not been secured for the on-going operation of transit services on Route 57 into Waukesha County; therefore, MCTS will adhere to the adopted 2019 Transit budget by modifying Route 57 service after funds appropriated for the extension of this route into Waukesha County have been exhausted.

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Approved by:



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Route 57 - Walnut - Appleton

