

County of Milwaukee
Interoffice Communication

DATE: 6/25/2021
TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: MCTS NEXT System Redesign – Implementation Report - Phase 3

BACKGROUND

A resolution approving of the implementation of the MCTS NEXT System Redesign Project and the 2020 System Map (File No. 20-476) was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors in September 2020. MCTS informed the County Board in December 2020 (File No. 20-881) of its intention to implement the MCTS NEXT system redesign in three phases beginning in March 2021 and continuing in June and September. This report provides an update on actions in Phase 3 which is scheduled to start August 29, 2021.

As a reminder, the goals of MCTS NEXT are to update the service model, in a cost neutral manner, from 40% high frequency vs. 60% low frequency to a new mix of 60% high frequency and 40% low frequency (high frequency being defined as buses running every 15 minutes or more often). The following actions are being taken to create the new system:

- Expand high frequency service in several new corridors
- Expand service to unserved or under-served job centers
- Provide faster service by removing lightly used bus stops that are close together
- Reduce or remove service in some areas where the demand for transit is low or very low
- Simplify the network to make it easier for riders to understand

Ultimately, these actions are intended to advance racial equity by increasing access for people of color to employment, education, healthcare, grocery stores, and other essential destinations.

MCTS NEXT: Phase 3 Service Change Details

Phase 3 will continue the planned expansion of high frequency service, expand rider's access to important job centers, and provide more frequent service on weekends in several corridors. These changes will include four sets of routes:

- BlueLine (Fond du Lac - Mill) & New Route 18 (National – Greenfield)
- New Route 60 (60th Street) and New Route 76 (76th Street)
- Route 22 (Center Street), Route 28 (108th Street), new Route 66 (Burleigh Street) and new Route 92 (92nd Street).
- Route 54 (Mitchell – Burnham), Route 55 (Layton Avenue), and Route 56 (Greenfield – S. 43rd)

BlueLine (Fond du Lac Avenue – Mill Road) and Route 18 (National Avenue)

- The BlueLine will undergo several changes that will expand access to job centers, extend high frequency service, and create an easier to understand route (**See Map 1 attached**).
 - The new BlueLine will travel between downtown (5th & Clybourn) and 124th & Bradley primarily via Wisconsin Avenue, Fond du Lac Avenue, 64th Street, Mill Road, and 107th Street.
 - A new route – Route 18 (National – Greenfield) - will replace former BlueLine service between downtown (Kilbourn & Water) and its current endpoint at 70th & Greenfield (see below). In addition, Route 18 will operate past 70th Street on Greenfield Avenue all the way to 124th Street.
 - The BlueLine will provide high frequency service on Fond du Lac Avenue between downtown and 60th & Mill as it does today.
 - The BlueLine's current endpoint at Park Place & Liberty will be extended to 124th & Bradley to multiple unserved retail businesses / grocery stores (Woodsman's, Aldi, and Sam's Club).
 - BlueLine service on Congress Street will be removed but continue to be served by Route 34 (Hopkins – Congress). BlueLine service on 92nd Street will be removed but continue to be served by new Route 92 (92nd Street) (see below).
 - Buses on these routes will operate during the same service span and at a similar level of frequency as the BlueLine.

- New Route 18 (National - Greenfield) will provide high frequency service between downtown and West Allis and replace BlueLine service (**See Map 1 attached**).
 - Route 18 will travel between downtown (Water Street & Kilbourn Avenue) and 124th & Greenfield primarily via Water Street / 1st Street, National Avenue, and Greenfield Avenue.
 - Route 18 will provide high frequency service (every 15 min.) to 84th & Greenfield Avenue (the BlueLine only provides high frequency service to 70th Street).
 - Route 18 buses west of 84th Street & Greenfield will alternate between serving segments of both Greenfield Avenue and National Avenue.
 - Route 18 will replace Route 56 service on Greenfield Avenue between 84th to 124th Street.
 - Route 18 will replace Route 54 service on National Avenue between 84th and 111th Street.
 - Service will run from 5 am to 1 am and is like existing service.

New Route 60 (60th Street) and New Route 76 (76th Street)

- New Route 60 (60th Street) will provide new high frequency service on N. 60th Street and creates a single route that replaces multiple routes along N. and S. 60th Streets (**See Map 2 attached**). New Route 66 (Burleigh Street) will replace current Route 60 service on Burleigh Street (see below).
 - Route 60 will travel between Brown Deer Road and Southridge primarily via 60th Street / Hawley Avenue.

- Route 60 will replace current Route 76 (N. 60th – S. 70th) service on N. 60th Street. The Route 76 name will be applied to a new route on N. and S. 76th Streets (see below).
 - Route 60 will replace current Route 64 (S. 60th Street) service on S. 60th Street). The Route 64 name will be retired.
 - Route 60 high frequency service will exist between Brown Deer Road and National Avenue. The frequency of service between National Avenue and Southridge will be comparable to today.
- New Route 76 (76th Street) will provide new high frequency service on N. and S. 76th Street and creates a single route (versus multiple routes) in this corridor (**See Map 2 attached**).
 - Route 76 will travel between Brown Deer Road and Southridge primarily via 76th Street. The route will also travel via a segment of 68th – 70th Street to serve the downtowns of Wauwatosa and West Allis.
 - Route 76 will replace current Route 67 (N. 76th Street – S. 84th Street) service on N. 76th Street. The Route 67 name will be retired.
 - Some low frequency segments of current Route 76 will be removed due to low ridership, i.e., S. 68th Street between National Avenue and Edgerton Avenue and S. 76th Street between Bluemound Road and Greenfield Avenue.
 - The frequency of weekday service will be every 15 minutes versus 20 min. on N. 76th Street and 35 to 45 min. on S. 76th Street.
 - Weekend service will be every 20 to 25 minutes and is like service on N. 76th Street. It will be twice as frequent as service on S. 76th Street today (40 to 50 min.).
 - Service will run from 5 am to 1 am and is similar to existing service.

Route 22 (Center Street), Route 28 (108th Street), New Route 66 (Burleigh Street) and New Route 92 (92nd Street)

- Route 22 (Center Street) will be modified to provide a new connection to the Mayfair shopping center and a nearby employment center at 124th Street & North Avenue.
 - Buses will travel between UWM and 124th & North primarily via Center Street, 92nd Street, and North Avenue.
 - The frequency of weekday service will be similar to today (20 to 25 minutes). Weekend service will be every 30 to 35 minutes.
 - Service will run from 5 am to 12:30 am and is similar to existing service.
- Route 28 (108th) will be modified to provide a new connection to the Mayfair Collection shopping center. It will also be extended to unserved employment centers along S. 108th Street and on N. 124th Street.
 - Buses will travel from N. Lovers Lane & Silver Spring to S. 108th & Speedway Drive primarily via 108th Street and 124th Street.
 - Some low frequency segments of Route 28 will be removed due to low ridership, i.e., Watertown Plank Road, 124th between Watertown Plank Road and North Avenue, 107th between Silver Spring Drive and Hampton Avenue, and Mayfair Road between Burleigh Street and Hampton Avenue.
 - Service will be extended south along S. 108th Street to provide new access to an unserved employment corridor.

- Service will be modified to provide new access to an unserved employment corridor along 124th Street between Capitol Drive and Silver Spring Drive.
- The frequency of weekday service will be similar to today (35 to 42 minutes).
- Service will run from 6 am to 11:30 pm and is similar to existing service.
- New Route 66 (Burleigh) is being created as the Route 60 name is being repurposed as the route that serves N. and S. 60th Street.
 - Buses will continue to travel from UWM to the Mayfair shopping center.
 - Service to the Mayfair Collection and 124th & Capitol will be removed and replaced with Route 28. Passengers will continue to be able to make this connection by transferring to Route 28 at 108th & Burleigh.
 - The frequency of service will be similar to today (20 to 30 minutes).
 - Service will run from 5 am to 1 am and is similar to existing service.
- New Route 92 (92nd) will establish one route (versus multiple routes) in this corridor. It will also provide another way to travel to the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center.
 - Buses will travel from 107th & Heather to 87th & Layton primarily along N. 91st Street and S. 92nd Street.
 - The frequency of service will be similar to today (approximately 30 min. on N. 91st Street and 60 min. on S. 92nd Street).
 - Service will run from 5 am to 12:30 am and is similar to existing service.

Route 54 (Mitchell – Chase), Route 55 (Layton), and Route 56 (Greenfield – 43rd)

- Route 54 (Mitchell – Chase) will be modified to provide a new connection to an unserved job center at Holt Street & Chase Avenue.
 - Buses will travel from 70th & National to Holt Street & Chase Avenue primarily via Burnham Avenue, Mitchell Street, and 1st / Chase Avenue.
 - Service on National Avenue to 111th Street will be removed but replaced by new Route 18 (National Avenue – Greenfield Avenue).
 - The frequency of weekday service on Burnham Street and Mitchell Street will be similar to today (30 minutes).
 - Service will run from 5 am to 12:30 am and is similar to existing service.
- Route 55 (Layton) will be modified to provide more frequent service to riders along Layton Avenue.
 - Buses will continue to travel from 108th & Layton Avenue to either Lake Drive & Kelly Senior Center or to Kinnickinnic Avenue & Lipton Street.
 - Service to Southridge via 76th Street will be removed, but passengers can still make this connection by transferring to the new high frequency Route 76 at 76th Street.
 - The frequency of weekday service will be 30 min. versus 40 minutes today.
 - Service will run from 5 am to 12 am and is similar to existing service.
- Route 56 (Greenfield – 43rd) will be modified to expand access to the underserved job corridor along Miller Park Way / S. 43rd Street and provide new service to Alverno College.

- Buses will travel from 1st & Mitchell Street to 29th & Loomis Road primarily via Greenfield Avenue, Miller Park Way - 43rd Street, Morgan Avenue, 27th Street, and Loomis Road.
- Service on Burnham Avenue between 43rd and 60th will be removed, but Route 54 will continue to provide service in this segment. Service on Burnham Avenue west of 60th to 66th and on 66th will be removed due to low ridership.
- Service on Greenfield Avenue between 60th and 124th Street will be removed but replaced by new Route 18 (National Avenue – Greenfield Avenue). Route 18 will provide high frequency service on Greenfield Avenue between 60th Street and 84th Street.
- The frequency of weekday service on Greenfield Avenue east of 43rd Street will be similar to today (25 to 30 minutes).
- Service will run from 5 am to 12:30 am and is similar to existing service.

MCTS will shorten travel times in Phase 3 (as was done in Phases 1 and 2) by reducing the number of bus stops on these routes. Bus stops would remain at key destinations and transfer corners as well as at major employers, schools, and multi-unit residences for elderly persons and persons with disabilities. These changes make it possible to add time into the layover and give operators more time to walk to nearby restrooms. It will also help operators get back on schedule if they happen to fall behind due to high ridership or heavy traffic conditions.

Outreach and Engagement Efforts

MCTS will prepare an extensive communications plan to inform and engage riders and stakeholders on service and bus stop changes. Under this plan MCTS will:

- Host virtual community meetings to provide route / schedule information to neighborhood and business groups and to underrepresented populations.
- Update our website with revised route maps/schedules. Videos will be prepared to describe key information on the new routings.
- Publish special issues of MCTS Bus Lines and Rider Insider.
- Develop and install bus stop signage to promote awareness of route/bus stop changes weeks in advance of implementation. Buses will also make audio/visual announcements of changes.
- Prepare press release for local media.
- Provide key materials in Spanish and use a Spanish language interpreter to answer questions.
- Provide new route/schedule information to County Board Supervisors and answer any questions.

MCTS will continue to meet with ATU 998 leadership to inform them and listen to their suggestions regarding the implementation plan. Wall sized maps of the new route network will be displayed for operators at both Fond du Lac and Kinnickinnic Stations to keep them abreast of route changes. In addition, the route training website will be updated to provide drivers with a map of every route, a video of the routing, the timepoints on the route, and a list of restrooms along the route.

Summary

Consistent with the adopted MCTS NEXT System Redesign Project, MCTS has been incrementally implementing the new route network. Phase 3 will be implemented on August 29, 2021. MCTS will create a well-rounded public outreach campaign to notify riders and stakeholders, including the County Board before changes take effect. MCTS will also regularly meet with ATU 998 leadership and bus operators to inform and seek their input.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

Prepared by:

Tom Winter, Director of Schedule and Planning, MCTS

Dan Boehm, President and Managing Director, MCTS

Approved by:

Julie Esch, Deputy Director

Donna Brown-Martin

Director, Department of Transportation

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
Janelle Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager