

County of Milwaukee
Interoffice Communication

DATE: 6/17/2020
TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
SUBJECT: Route 19 Modifications - Improving Operator Layovers and Increasing Service Efficiency

POLICY

Proposed additions, deletions, and modifications to transit routes and services are subject to approval by the County Executive and County Board of Supervisors.

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) Route 19 serves a major transit corridor on Atkinson Avenue, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, S. 13th Street and S. 20th Street between Silver Spring Drive and College Avenue. Bus operators on Route 19 serve over 4,000 passengers on a typical weekday.

Proposed Changes

MCTS recommends two changes to Route 19 to address requests by bus operators for an improved layover location and to increase service efficiency by removing a lightly used street segment (see attached map).

The first change involves a short extension of the northern end of the route to serve Florist Avenue & Teutonia Avenue. There are multiple businesses in this neighborhood (especially a Citgo gas station) where operators would be able to use a restroom at the end of their trip. The current endpoint / layover at 35th Street & Silver Spring Drive has a limited number of businesses that welcome operators into their establishments. The current location also presents operational challenges as the narrowness of the street occasionally results in minor motor vehicle collisions with buses and bus mirrors (especially in the winter months when snowbanks reduce the width of the street). A side benefit of this change is that residents north of Silver Spring Drive along 35th Street in the Thurston Woods neighborhood would have direct bus service. This change is shown on a map detail cutout in the upper left-hand corner of the attached map.

The second modification would increase the efficiency of Route 19 by removing seldom used bus stops on a segment of the S. 20th Street branch of this route south of College Avenue. Buses traveling through this area pick up about 5 riders per day on average (fewer on weekends). Most of these riders would be within a typical walking distance (one-fourth mile) of bus stops served by this route on College Avenue. The time saved by eliminating this seldom used loop will benefit passengers traveling to the end-of-the line and allow buses to return to other segments of the route where service is much more used by riders. This change is shown on a map detail cutout in the lower right-hand corner of the attached map.

Impact on Operating Cost / Ridership

The combination of both route changes would balance each other such that there would not be an impact on operating cost (e.g. the same number of buses will be used). Similarly, the frequency of service would remain comparable to current service. MCTS estimates there would be a nominal increase in ridership primarily due to the extension of service to Florist & Teutonia.

Title VI Review

MCTS Title VI guidelines require any service change be examined to determine if it meets the definitions of "major service change". A major service change is confirmed if any of five measures take affect:

- Does the change affect 25% of the bus hours?
- Does the change affect 25% of the one-way mileage?
- Does the change affect 25% of the service span?
- Does the change reduce the frequency by 50%?
- Does the change create a gap in service greater than one half mile?).

This change does not meet the definition of a major service change. As such, the action does not trigger a statistical analysis of whether there is a potential for a disparate impact on minority populations or disproportionate burden on low-income populations; nonetheless, aspects of racial equity associated with this change is considered below.

Advancing Racial Equity

Route 19 serves underrepresented populations (e.g. African American and Hispanic persons) along much of the route. Overall, the service changes suggest they will have a positive impact on advancing racial equity. This assertion is based on practical considerations, i.e., the extension will provide new service to a predominantly African American neighborhood on 35th Street from Silver Spring Drive to Florist Avenue (according to ACS Census data). In addition, the frequency of service will remain comparable to existing levels for all current riders.

Outreach and Engagement

If approved, outreach and engagement activities will commence with riders and stakeholders such as YWCA, Wisconsin Job Center, Historic King Drive BID, Historic Mitchell Street BID, QPS Employment Center and Parallel Employment Group. In addition, MCTS will communicate information about these changes directly with passengers via the following efforts:

- Installing signs at affected bus stops weeks in advance of implementation to promote awareness
- Adding route/schedule information at www.ridemcts.com and updating electronic schedule information and real-time information system data, as well as printing new schedules
- Location-based audio announcements at specific places along the route impacted by the changes
- Reporting on the change in the MCTS Rider Insider Newsletter
- Providing information to county supervisors and being available to answer questions as requested

MCTS route schedule changes are implemented four times annually. If this recommended service change is approved, it will go into effect in late August after operators select new routes consistent with the collective bargaining agreement between MCTS and ATU 998.

FISCAL EFFECT

There is no fiscal impact of these modifications to Route 19. Operating costs will not increase as a result of this change. Ridership and revenue changes are estimated to be nominal.

RECOMMENDATION

MCTS recommends approval of the resolution to modify Route 19 to provide operators with an improved layover location and to increase service efficiency.

Prepared by:

Tom Winter, Director of Schedule and Planning, MCTS
 Dan Boehm, President and Managing Director, MCTS

Approved by:



Donna Brown-Martin
Director, Department of Transportation

Attachment: Map of Route 19

Route 19 - Current and Proposed Service Changes

