



OFFICE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Milwaukee County

DONALD G. NATZKE

DIRECTOR

To: Honorable Michael Mayo Sr. Chair
Transportation, Public Works and Transit

RE: Displacement of Fixed Route Service at Area Shopping Malls

During its meeting of Monday, September 9, the Milwaukee County Commission for Persons with Disabilities received a report on the pending removal of MCTS bus route from properties managed by Developers Diversified Realty (DDR). The specific properties are located at: 2625 S 108th St West Allis, Wisconsin 53227, N Green Bay Rd & W Brown Deer Rd Brown Deer, Wisconsin 53209, and 12575 W Capitol Dr., Brookfield, Wisconsin 53005. Stores located at these properties include: Walgreens, Pick N Save, T.J. Maxx, Kohls, and Menards.

If allowed to stand, Milwaukee County Transit and responsible businesses will be charged with identifying alternatives to lessen the negative impact faced by both shoppers and employees of the businesses located on DDR managed property. Among these shoppers, and perhaps employees, are people with disabilities, senior citizens, and other individuals who choose or rely on the bus for their transportation.

During 2012, slightly less than 100,000 times people using wheelchairs, scooters, and walkers exercised their freedom and independence by use of a Milwaukee County bus. Countless others with disabilities such as blindness, cardiovascular disease, pulmonary disorders, etc. similarly relied on the bus to shop for groceries, purchase household items, and enjoy leisure events with their friends and families.

Through use of a lower cost transportation option these individuals maximized scarce dollars for themselves and saved Milwaukee County tax resources. We take the bus when weather is inclement, we recognize that more time may be required to complete essential tasks of our lives, and we carry our packages often over longer distances. But we exercise our independence and our civil rights as citizens through the use of this transportation tool available to us and others.

Though DDR represents that buses cause significant damage to their property, specific instances are not substantiated. We acknowledge that there are costs associated with operating a business but highly doubt that any such expenses outstrip other costs as snow removal, other maintenance, etc. MCTS has extended financial offers to improve accessibility accommodations at the sites. We find it intolerable, that destinations required to live a full and independent life be placed outside of our reach by barriers of distance, inconvenience, and disregard of our contributions to commerce. Barriers erected by this company now, and others in the past and likely in the future, cannot be allowed to remain in a community which supports the dignity and full inclusion of all of its citizens, including those of us with disabilities. On behalf of people with disabilities, we ask that every effort be made to reverse the position taken by DDR and further to make it clear that our community will not support the imposition of other such barriers in the path of independence for those of us with disabilities.

Respectfully,

Don Natzke
Director, Office for Persons with Disabilities