

County of Milwaukee Interoffice Communication

DATE: March 19, 2021

TO: Supervisor Marcelia Nicholson, Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: MCTS Gold Line Replacement in 2022 – Informational Report

BACKGROUND

Since 1999, Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) has been operating a transit route between Downtown Milwaukee and Brookfield Square in Waukesha County with additional stops at the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center (MRMC). The service is currently provided by the MCTS Gold Line. A contract with the City of Waukesha, acting as an agent for Waukesha County, covers the costs of the route while operating in Waukesha County. The nature of this contract will change with the introduction of the new East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. MCTS will pivot from being the service provider to the service purchaser.

Milwaukee County was awarded a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for construction of the BRT line in December 2020. Groundbreaking for this project will begin in spring 2021 and service is scheduled to be operational in fall 2022. The BRT route will replace the Gold Line east of MRMC into Downtown Milwaukee. West of MRMC, there are 78,000 riders per year pre-COVID traveling between Milwaukee County and Waukesha County.

Upon introduction of the BRT line, the best option for these passengers is to travel via an extension of Waukesha Metro Route 1. This route currently operates from Downtown Waukesha to Brookfield Square. Extending it farther east to MRMC will provide for the fewest transfers for passengers traveling to popular activity centers such as the Corners Retail development, Bluemound Road retail and office corridor, Brookfield Square, Milwaukee County Zoo, and MRMC. That route also terminates in Downtown Waukesha at the Waukesha Metro transfer center, providing an opportunity to connect other Waukesha Metro bus routes to Milwaukee County.

The proposed extension of Waukesha Metro Route 1 will operate east on Bluemound Road to 95th Street and north into the medical complex just as the Gold Line does today. An attachment to this report shows maps of MCTS as Service Provider in 2021 vs. Waukesha Metro as Service Provider in 2022.

The past contract exemplifies intergovernmental cooperation between Milwaukee County and Waukesha County for the benefit of transit users, residents, and businesses in both Counties. As the 2022 transit operating budget request is developed, MCTS will acknowledge our changing role from service provider to service purchaser beginning in late 2022.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

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Approved by:

Julie Esch, Deputy Director

Donna Brown-Martin
Director, Department of Transportation