

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-office Communication

DATE: 3/21/2025

TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
Julie Esch, Interim President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation and the Interim President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System, requesting approval to not implement the Transportation Network Companies (TNC) bus driver relief pilot program, as directed in the 2025 Adopted Budget for Milwaukee County.

FILE TYPE: Action Item

REQUEST

The 2025 Adopted Budget includes an appropriation of \$35,000 to develop a pilot program offering driver relief rides through Transportation Network Companies that will provide a cost-effective operation for enhancing the safety and security of bus operators. The budget requested a progress report in April.

BACKGROUND

In June of 2024, the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) and ATU Local 998 agreed to implement a temporary van relief program for bus operators for enhanced safety and security. ATU Local 998 learned of a similar program operated by the Dallas Area Rapid Transit and wanted to test it in Milwaukee. The pilot program was to provide a total of two vans, one for each station, to pick up operators at scheduled relief points Monday through Friday until 6:00 p.m. after which remaining service terminates at the stations. Funding to cover pilot program expenses (operator wages, fuel, and maintenance) was made available within the existing budget for 2024 only. The two vans dedicated to the pilot program were borrowed from the training department.

Subsequently, the Adopted Budget for 2025 included the purchase of two additional vans for the pilot program but no operating funds were appropriated for the increased expenditures. The County Board also approved of a \$35,000 appropriation to purchase services from Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) as an alternative option.

UPDATE

MCTS developed specifications for the procurement of TNC services to provide operator reliefs. Systemwide service includes 123 daily relief points, 58 at Fond du Lac Station (FDL) and 65 at Kinnickinnic Station (KK) for a weekly total of 615 rides. Each

TNC contacted through the bidding process charges \$10 per ride. If TNC service were provided at all relief points each week, the total cost would be \$6,150. Funding would be exhausted in less than six weeks into the pilot.

	FDL	KK	Total
Rides Daily	58	65	123
Rides Weekly	290	325	615
Cost / Ride	10	10	10
Cost / Week at 100% Usage	\$2,900	\$3,250	\$6,150
Length of Funding Availability			5.69 weeks

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses.
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the costs of providing TNC's for driver relief rides, funding for the pilot program is estimated to be exhausted within six weeks of launch. Therefore, it is recommended that the pilot program not be implemented.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, MCDOT

John Rodgers, Deputy Director, MCDOT

Julie Esch, Interim President and Managing Director, MCTS (jesch@mcts.org)

Kevin Pumphrey, Chief Operating Officer, MCTS (kpumphrey@mcts.org)

PREPARED BY:

Julie Esch, Interim President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System

APPROVED BY:



Donna Brown-Martin
Director, Department of Transportation

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution

Fiscal Note

cc: Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Manager, Office of the County Clerk