

## COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE

### Inter-office Communication

DATE: 3/17/2023  
TO: Marcelia Nicholson, Chair, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation  
SUBJECT: CONNECT 1 Bus Rapid Transit / Route Changes and Title VI Equity Analysis  
  
FILE TYPE: Informational Report

#### REQUEST

MCTS is providing an update regarding changes to bus routes that are adjacent to the CONNECT 1 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line which is scheduled to start June 2023.

#### POLICY

According to Chapter 1.11a (7) of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances, all mass transit policy matters pertaining to the establishment of fares and other charges, standard of service, route locations, capital improvements, and service improvements are to be brought before the Committee on Transportation and Transit.

#### BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County's investment in the CONNECT 1 BRT line will create a premium level of transit service that expands mobility and spurs economic activity. The introduction of CONNECT 1 BRT also presents an opportunity to improve the reliability of service on adjacent local routes, to make them easier to understand, and to expand access to jobs.

These route changes are in alignment with the MCTS mission to connect our community to jobs, education, and life with essential transit services as well as Milwaukee County's mission to enhance the quality of life in Milwaukee County through great public service.

#### **Recommended Route Change Details**

The following routes are recommended for adjustments that would be implemented with the start of CONNECT 1 BRT service:

- GoldLine (Wisconsin - UWM)
  - CONNECT 1 BRT will provide a premium level of service along a majority of the GoldLine and thus allows the latter to be replaced. The GoldLine name itself will be retired.
- Route 30 (Sherman – Wisconsin)
  - Service will be increased as Route 30 will serve former GoldLine passengers between downtown and UWM.
- Waukesha Metro Route 1 (Brookfield)
  - Waukesha Metro's Route 1 will be extended from Brookfield Square to the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and replace GoldLine service. MCTS and Waukesha Metro worked together to develop this plan. MCTS previously informed the County Board of this plan (File No. 21-357).

- Route 21 (North Avenue)
  - Service will be expanded to maintain service along Downer Avenue every day and all year long. Route 21 service on Downer Avenue today does not operate on weekends or during the summer.
- Route 14 (Humboldt – Forest Home)
  - Route 14 will be modified into two separate routes to improve reliability and on time performance. New Route 14 (Humboldt Blvd) will primarily serve Humboldt Boulevard between Bayshore and downtown. Riders can transfer to CONNECT 1 BRT at the Jackson & Wisconsin Station (as well as to Route 30).
- New Route 24 (Forest Home)
  - New Route 24 (Forest Home) will primarily serve Forest Home Avenue between Southridge and the MCTS Administration Building on 17th & Fond du Lac. Riders can transfer to CONNECT 1 Bus Station at the 16th & Wisconsin Station as well as to Route 30.
- BlueLine (Fond du Lac - Mill)
  - The BlueLine will be shortened to end at Marquette University (16th Street & Wisconsin Avenue). Riders can transfer to CONNECT 1 Bus Station at the 16th & Wisconsin Station as well as to Route 30.

## **Outreach and Engagement Efforts**

MCTS will take several actions to inform and engage riders on these service changes:

- Host virtual and in person community education meetings (3) to provide route / schedule information to neighborhood and business groups and to underrepresented populations.
- Update 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 have a Spanish language interpreter available to answer questions.
- Provide detailed route/schedule information to County Board Supervisors whose districts are impacted route changes.

MCTS will meet with ATU 998 leadership to inform them and listen to their suggestions. In addition, staff will go to Fond du Lac Station and Kinnickinnic Station to provide information on route changes. Bus operators will be trained via a website that includes a map of every route, a video of the routing, the timepoints on the route, and a list of restrooms along the route.

## **Title VI Review**

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

- Does the change affect 25% of the bus hours of a route or group of routes?
- Does the change affect 25% of the one-way mileage of a route or group of routes?

- Does the change affect 25% of the daily service span?
- Does the change reduce the frequency of service (increases headway) by 50%?
- Does the change create a gap in service greater than one half mile from the nearest service?

If a major service change is confirmed, MCTS must prepare a service and fare equity analysis (SAFE). The SAFE indicates whether the change has a disparate impact on the minority population or disproportionate burden on the low-income population. If either impact exists, MCTS must take steps to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the impacts where practicable.

Applying these thresholds to these groups of routes indicates they are a major service change. Consequently, MCTS performed a SAFE analysis.

The process of completing a SAFE involves several calculations. The first step was to measure the number of annual people trips traveling through each tract in the current system as well as after the changes were implemented. These data sets were evaluated for both the low-income population and for the minority population. A comparison was then made between the number of annual people trips for the low-income and non-low-income population and similarly between the minority population and the non-minority population.

The next step in the process was to compare the percent change in annual people trips for each pair of population groups, i.e., minority to non-minority and low income to non-low income. If the difference in percent change is less than 80% (known as the Four-Fifths rule), then the impact on the minority or low-income groups would be considered disparate and disproportionate, respectively. If the difference was higher than 80%, then the impacts would not be considered disparate or disproportionate.

A review of the data indicates these changes would not have a disparate impact on minority populations nor a disproportionate burden on low-income populations, i.e., the percent change exceeds four-fifths or 80% (see table below).

Population Group	Annual People Trips Before	Annual People Trips After	4/5ths Rule	Percent Change
Low Income	13,754,970	13,614,960	>100%	-1%
Non-Low Income	8,562,025	8,328,280		-3%
Minority	11,176,460	11,548,530	>100%	3%
Non-Minority	11,140,535	10,394,440		-7%

NOTE: A "People Trip" is defined as the total population served by a route (or group of routes) multiplied by the annual scheduled trips on that route (or group of routes).

#### ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.
- 3A: Invest "upstream" to address root causes of health disparities.
- 3B: Enhance the County's fiscal health and sustainability.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

#### RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

FISCAL EFFECT

No fiscal impacts. These service changes were included in the 2023 Budget approved by the County Board of Supervisors.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Tom Winter, Director of Service Development, MCTS (twinter@mcts.org)  
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PREPARED BY:

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APPROVED BY:

*Donna Brown-Martin*

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