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5 **A RESOLUTION**
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7 Requesting the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) to Develop a Data-Informed
8 Bus Fare Compliance Strategy to Strengthen Revenue and Ensure Long-term
9 Sustainability
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12 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is innovating the way
13 people across southeast Wisconsin get to work, school, medical appointments,
14 entertainment and anywhere else they need to go; and
15

16 WHEREAS, at the June 18, 2025 meeting of the Committee on Finance, the
17 Milwaukee County Department of Transportation reported a projected \$10.9 million
18 deficit in the MCTS departmental budget; and
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20 WHEREAS, MCTS estimates that fare evasion in 2024 reduced revenues by
21 approximately \$4 million, based on a systemwide fare evasion rate of 25%; and
22

23 WHEREAS, if fare evasion were reduced to 15% systemwide, MCTS projects
24 that an additional \$3 million in revenue could be realized; and
25

26 WHEREAS, amid ongoing concerns about the budget of MCTS, improving fare
27 compliance is a necessary strategy to strengthen revenue and ensure long-term
28 sustainability; and
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30 WHEREAS, the CONNECT 1: Wisconsin Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route
31 launched June 2023 with free rides; and
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33 WHEREAS, in April 2024, CONNECT 1 began utilizing a pre-board payment
34 model, lacking the onboard fare verification system used on other MCTS routes; and
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36 WHEREAS, a January 2025 survey conducted by MCTS found an estimated
37 24.6% overall fare evasion rate across 249 trips on multiple routes, with fare evasion on
38 CONNECT 1 higher at 33%, indicating disproportionately lower fare compliance on this
39 route; and
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41 WHEREAS, any approach to fare enforcement must prioritize operator and rider
42 safety while promoting fairness, equity, and fiscal responsibility; and
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44 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County is committed to developing data-driven solutions

45 to improve fare compliance and reduce fare evasion without increasing risk to operators
46 or passengers; and
47

48 WHEREAS, the Committee on Transportation and Transit, at its meeting of
49 July 9, 2025, recommended adoption of File No. 25-479 (vote 4-0); and
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51 WHEREAS, the Committee on Finance, at its meeting of July 17, 2025,
52 recommended adoption of File No. 25-479 (vote 7-0); now, therefore,
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54 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors requests MCTS
55 to provide strategic and data-driven recommendations to reduce bus fare evasion
56 without creating a safety issue for operators or other passengers that could be
57 considered for funding as part of the 2026 Budget; and
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59 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
60 requests MCTS to develop and submit a data-informed, rider- and operator-safe
61 security and fare compliance strategy for the CONNECT 1 route that:
62

63 A) Implements a more rigorous fare enforcement strategy for the CONNECT 1
64 route that achieves fare compliance rates on par with other MCTS routes;
65 and/or
66

67 B) Recommends discontinuing the pre-board payment system on the CONNECT
68 1 route and transitions to requiring fare payment upon entry to the bus; and
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70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the complete report shall be submitted to the
71 Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors no later than the September 2025 meeting
72 cycle.
73

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75 07/17/25
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