

**COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE**  
Inter-office Communication

Date: 8/18/2023

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

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

Subject: From the Director, Department of Transportation providing an Informational Report regarding an update on the Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project.

File Type: Informational Report

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**BACKGROUND**

In January 2022, the Milwaukee County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) submitted a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant application to address reckless driving and its impact on pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders in Milwaukee County. On July 26, 2022, the County was awarded \$235,000, 80% of which (\$188,000) is composed of federal funding, meaning \$47,000 is composed of local match. At its March 2022 meeting, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors retroactively approved application for and acceptance of this funding, if awarded (File No. 22-374).

After an extensive Request for Proposals (RFP) process, in April 2023, the County Board approved a Professional Services contract with public engagement and community planning consulting firm MUSE Community + Design (File No. 23-458). Soon after, the public engagement and data analysis processes started.

MCDOT and MUSE staff along with staff from the data analysis subconsultant firm, WSP, formulated a plan to carry out Phase 1 of the Complete Communities Transportation Planning Project. The upcoming summer-long series of public engagement meetings was branded as the "Safe Streets Roadshow" and, one-by-one, public meetings in all 19 municipalities were scheduled with their respective municipal officials and promoted using a variety of mediums. Through multiple press releases, emails to elected officials and stakeholders, organic and paid social media, a project website <http://county.milwaukee.gov/CompleteCommunities> and extensive coverage from Milwaukee's NBC affiliate, TMJ4 News and its "Project: Drive Safer" story series, and coverage from other local news stations WISN 12, FOX 6 and CBS 58, Milwaukee County residents were informed about this unprecedented effort to bring all 19 municipalities and their residents to the table to share how street safety concerns and reckless driving impacts their lives. As of August 11<sup>th</sup>, MCDOT hosted 18 of its 21 scheduled meetings and can report the following:

- 1) 486 in-person attendees through the first 18 meetings
- 2) 27 attendees per meeting
- 3) 77% increase in attendance from June to July meetings (13 to 23 people)
- 4) 54% increase in attendance from the July to August meetings (23 to 40 people)
- 5) 102% increase in attendance from the June to August meetings (13 to 40 people)
- 6) An estimated 650 pieces of digital, written and place-based feedback have been received
- 7) Several of the high-level takeaways include:
  - a. Drivers are changing behavior and travel patterns due to the presence of reckless driving (either driving less or taking different routes)
  - b. Residents state that streets would feel safer if:
    - i. More people used transit, biking and walking as normal modes of transportation
    - ii. More people understood traffic rules and laws
    - iii. Vehicles slowed down
    - iv. Streets were designed with people in mind instead of vehicles
  - c. Residents would do these things more if streets were safer:
    - i. Ride bicycles
    - ii. Take their children to parks
    - iii. Feel comfortable giving their children more independence
    - iv. Visit local businesses and restaurants
- 8) Streets such as Capitol Drive, Fond du Lac Avenue, National Avenue, N. 60<sup>th</sup> Street, N. 76<sup>th</sup> Street, Silver Spring Drive, Chicago Avenue, Drexel Avenue, S. 76<sup>th</sup> Street and Lake Drive were all mentioned and pointed out as dangerous with high levels of traffic, high speeds, and streets some people try to avoid.

The project's Public Advisory Committee (PAC) began recruitment in June and held its first meeting in July. This committee is composed of representatives from the following community-based organizations: VIA CDC, Menomonee Valley Partners, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Coalition for Safe Driving MKE, Safe & Sound, Community Huddle, Milwaukee Ministries in Place, Bay Bridge, MICAH, BublR Bikes and Wisconsin Bike Fed. These organizations are given a stipend to help promote, attend and facilitate the Safe Streets Roadshow public engagement meetings and offer localized insight into the issues of reckless driving and multimodal safety. Three more PAC meetings will take place over the next year.

Recruitment for the Safety Working Group is also underway in which experts from local Public Works Departments, transportation engineers, law enforcement officials, educators and other professionals who devote their careers to transportation safety will convene twice as a large group and also break out into subcommittees over the next year to further discuss these issues and offer insight into the current state of safety on Milwaukee County roadways.

Three more Safe Streets Roadshow public engagement events will take place throughout August, including a Spanish Language public meeting, and the project's

digital survey will close on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The link to the survey is <http://bit.ly/mcdotsurvey>.

The Phase 1 deliverable will be a Current Street Safety Assessment report for Milwaukee County which will include a recap of our Safe Streets Roadshow public engagement meetings and a synthesis of public feedback from those meetings with a detailed analysis of the last five years of countywide crash data.

Additionally, a comprehensive crash data dashboard (similar to Milwaukee County's COVID-19 dashboard), developed in partnership with the Medical College of Wisconsin and UW-Milwaukee, will be released later this year. This online tool will display crash trends and hotspots throughout Milwaukee County using a variety of demographic criteria to better inform the public and all parties working towards improving multimodal safety and mitigating reckless driving and its impacts.

Phase 2 of this project will begin early next year with the development of a countywide Safe Streets Action Plan and an Action Plan for each participating municipality.

#### **ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities.
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Department of Transportation recommends that the County Board receive this item and place it on file.

#### **VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation  
Julie Esch, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation

#### **PREPARED BY:**

Jeff Sponcia, Transportation Program Planning Manager, MCDOT Director's Office

#### **APPROVED BY:**

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

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