

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-office Communication

DATE: 6/21/2024

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

FROM: Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation
Denise Wandke, President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System

SUBJECT: From the Director, Department of Transportation and the President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System providing an Informational Report on Milwaukee Transport Services, Inc. (dba Milwaukee County Transit System) Submission of Proposal to Manage the Waukesha Metro Transit System.

FILE TYPE: Informational Report

REQUEST

This report is for informational purposes only.

BACKGROUND

In May of 2024, the City of Waukesha Transit Commission released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to manage the Waukesha Metro Transit System's (Metro) services for a five-year maximum period, beginning January 9, 2025.

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) and Metro have a long history of transit service collaboration as many customers travel between Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. A recent example of collaboration is the seamless service between Waukesha County and CONNECT 1 and purchase of the UMO/WisGO account-based collection system. Building on this foundation of regional partnership, MCTS has submitted a proposal, in response to the RFP, to manage Waukesha's transit services. Should the proposal be selected, MCTS would be required to provide Metro with a general manager to direct Metro's fixed route and paratransit service and be the onsite manager of a sub-corporation, that would be created under Milwaukee Transport Services, Inc., to employ sixty (60) members assist in system operations. Other requirements include compliance with local, state, and federal laws, administration of safety and training programs, labor negotiations, submission of accurate and timely data and/or preparation of monthly reports to the City of Waukesha.

Metro consists of ten fixed routes and a paratransit system (operated under the name "Waukesha Lift") with an annual ridership of 500,000 and operating budget of \$7.1 million. This includes \$2.5 million in existing contract work for Waukesha and Milwaukee Counties. The City provides a 31,000 square foot administration and maintenance facility, 13 bus bays, 23 fixed route buses, four (4) paratransit buses and

two (2) paratransit vans. This is compared to MCTS's 44 routes and 344 fixed route buses.

MCTS believes it is best positioned to operate Metro in accordance with RFP requirements and within federal, state, and local regulations. Additionally, from a regional perspective, MCTS operation of Metro is a logical next step in transit growth for existing and future riders. It is also consistent with MCTS's goals to provide Microtransit options beyond what is already provided by FlexRide MKE. Although state legislation does not allow regional transit authorities nor provides for dedicated funding, of any kind, there are opportunities for efficiencies and improved customer experience. Ultimately, the hope is to illustrate how a regional approach to public transportation is a key component in growing the region economically.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the strategic plan:

2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity.

2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions.

3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities.

RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes only. Should MCTS be awarded the contract to manage the Waukesha Metro Transit System, the Department of Transportation and MCTS will request approval to enter into the contract at that time.

FISCAL EFFECT

There is no fiscal effect. Should MCTS be awarded the contract, MCTS will be reimbursed for expenses incurred pursuant to the contract. It will not require an expenditure of county funds.

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation
Denise Wandke, President and Managing Director, MCTS, dwandke@mcts.org
Julie Esch, Deputy Director, MCTS, jesch@mcts.org

PREPARED BY:

Julie Esch, Deputy Director, Milwaukee County Transit System

APPROVED BY:



Donna Brown-Martin, Director, Department of Transportation

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