

**County of Milwaukee**  
**Interoffice Communication**

**DATE:** 5/4/2018  
**TO:** John Weishan, Jr., Chairperson, Transportation, Public Works & Transit Committee  
**FROM:** Julie Esch, Interim Director, Department of Transportation  
**SUBJECT:** MCTS Update Relative to Funding for Bus Routes 6 and 61

BACKGROUND

In 2012, the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin and Midwest Environmental Advocates filed a lawsuit against federal transportation agencies and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) on behalf of Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope and the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin for inadequately addressing needs of persons who rely on transit within the scope of the \$1.7 billion Zoo Interchange Project. Neither, Milwaukee County or Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) were a party to the lawsuit.

In 2014, a settlement between WisDOT and the plaintiffs specified that \$2.875 million annually would be available for eligible transit services for four years with an additional \$500,000 annually for marketing. These resources are controlled by the plaintiffs, who MCTS has coordinated with closely to ensure that the funds are spent in a manner that accommodates goals of the lawsuit settlement. Those funds are expected to be exhausted near the end of 2018. At this time, two bus routes are operated with these funds:

- Route 6 (New Berlin Industrial Park Express) is used by about 145 passengers per day, and operates at a productivity of 5.1 passengers per bus hour. See Map A attached and <https://www.ridemcts.com/routes-schedules/6>
- Route 61 (Appleton – Keefe) is used by about 825 passengers per day, and operates at a productivity of 10.9 passengers per bus hour. See Map B attached and <https://www.ridemcts.com/routes-schedules/61>

For comparison purposes, the average productivity for MCTS routes is about 25 passengers per bus hour.

In advance of preparing the 2018 Transit Budget, MCTS contacted transit administrators in Waukesha to inquire about whether Waukesha County would be interested in supporting the job access provided by these routes upon expiration of the Zoo Litigation settlement funds. The response was somewhat encouraging with respect to Route 6. It was acknowledged that Waukesha could choose to fund a transit route between Brookfield Square and the New Berlin Industrial Park, which would provide for connections to both MCTS services at Brookfield Square, and Waukesha Metro Services at Brookfield Square. The response regarding Route 61 was less encouraging because most ridership on this route is within Milwaukee County even though about half of the cost of the route is associated with service in Waukesha County.

The 2018 transit budget narrative reflected the situation at that time.

*Routes 6 and 61 will be discontinued in December 2018 when the Zoo Interchange litigation settlement funds that support operations of these routes are exhausted.*

In turn, the Adopted 2018 Transit Budget included this same language, which is motivating recent advocacy for continuation of these transit services. Milwaukee County's options for funding the routes are limited.

Without the Zoo Litigation and settlement agreement creating financial resources targeted specifically to regional transit, the routes would likely not have been created because the transit policy of Milwaukee County has been that services beyond County borders will be covered by a cost sharing agreement with the neighboring County or municipalities. Respectful of this policy, MCTS has been evaluating alternatives to continue the portion of Route 61 that is within Milwaukee County where most ridership on this route occurs. While MCTS begins to draft the 2019 transit budget, and consider costs and anticipated ridership of an alternative, the context of the current situation weighs heavily:

- There is a significant revenue reduction (\$2.875 million) in 2019 transit budget compared to 2018
- Until we refine our draft of the 2019 transit budget, we will not know whether MCTS can responsibly recommend that the County fund an alternative
- The expected productivity (passengers per bus hour) of an alternative would be compared to other transit routes should there be a need to revise transit services due to a lack of funding/revenue

Finally, this year the plaintiffs have taken the lead in communicating their concern for Routes 6 and 61 with the State of Wisconsin and our neighbors to the west. The Milwaukee County Department of Transportation has also reached out to Waukesha County and has prepared MCTS to evaluate any opportunities for inter-governmental cost sharing should such funding opportunities surface.

#### FISCAL EFFECT

There is little fiscal impact in 2018 resulting from assessing the feasibility of continuing Routes 6 or 61. The impacts of continuing the services in one form or another in 2019 will have to be well understood and communicated within the context of the 2019 transit operating budget.

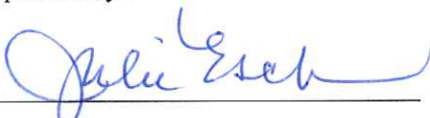
#### RECOMMENDATION

This report is for informational purposes unless otherwise directed.

Prepared by:

Dan Boehm, President & Managing Director

Approved by:



Julie Esch  
Interim Director, Department of Transportation

cc: Chris Abele, County Executive  
Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors  
Joe Lamers, Budget Director, DAS - PSB  
Steve Cady, Research Director, Office of the Comptroller  
Jonathan Schatz, Sr. Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB

Map A:  
Milwaukee County Transit System Route 6

# 6

## New Berlin Industrial Park Express

**Serving:**  
NEW BERLIN INDUSTRIAL PARK

Sponsored by MICAH / Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin

Help us save a tree and save paper, please only take ONE timetable. For the most up-to-date route, schedule and fare information, visit:

**RideMCTS.com**  
414-344-6711



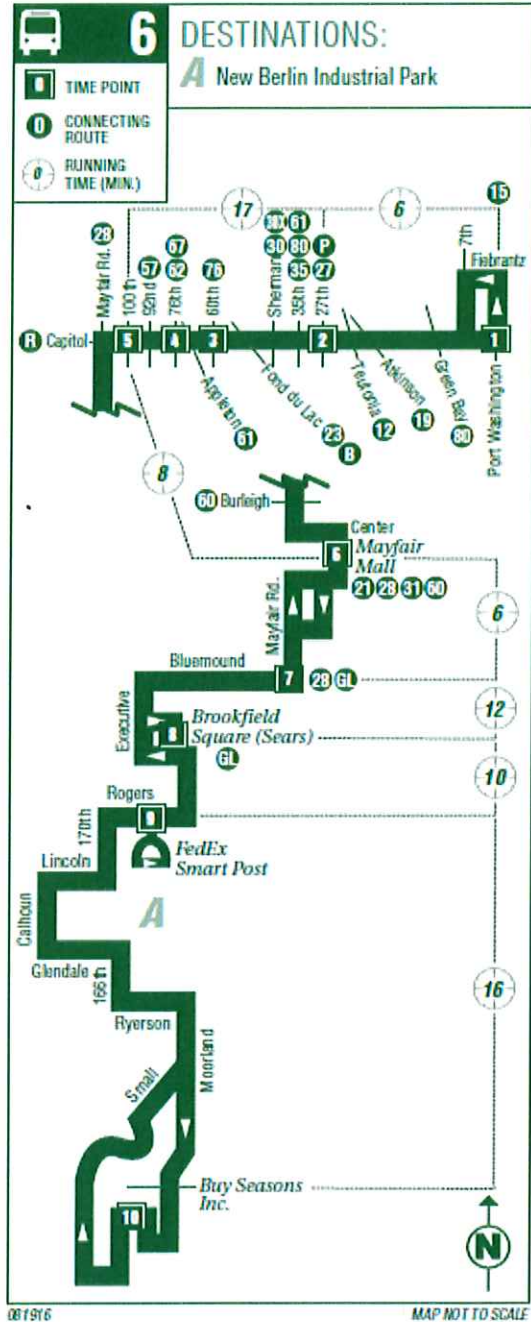
Effective Date:  
**August 28, 2016**



**Service Hours:**  
**Weekdays**  
3:00 AM - 1:03 AM  
**Saturdays**  
3:00 AM - 1:03 AM  
**Sundays  
Holidays\***  
3:00 AM - 1:03 AM

**\*Holidays are:**  
New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Fourth of July  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas

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MAP NOT TO SCALE

## Map B: Milwaukee County Transit System Route 61

