Improving Economic Mobility through Innovative Transit Solutions

Bringing BRT to Milwaukee County

2021 Southeast Wisconsin Transportation Symposium

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Transportation Manager, Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS)

Michael Zabel  
Construction Manager for the E-W BRT Project, HNTB
We can improve economic mobility by removing barriers: expanding access to quality transit and shortening travel times.

“The number one barrier for job seekers is often transportation; making sure people have a way to get to work opens doors for workers and strengthens our communities. Healthy transit systems mean stronger neighborhoods, greater equity, and more economic opportunities.” – WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson
## Improving Economic Mobility – Challenges

### Milwaukee County

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*Census 2010*

Zero-car households Nationally: 5.6% to 7.5%
Improving Economic Mobility – Solutions

Redesigned route network to create more high frequency service and expand access to jobs

New modern transit service along the most vital, most traveled and most congested corridor in Wisconsin

Feasibility Study will examine options to enhance transit service along 27th Street in Milwaukee County
Mass Transit in Milwaukee County

Budget: $162M
  Fixed Route: $145M
  Paratransit: $17M

Federal COVID funds have supplemented revenue losses due to the ongoing effects of COVID19 pandemic.

However, the majority of Federal COVID funds supporting transit will be committed by the end of 2022.
Mass Transit in Milwaukee County

Population: 948,201

- 48 Routes
- 368 Buses
- 750 Bus Drivers
- 1,057 Employees
MCTS NEXT – Route Network Redesign

Update the route network, in a cost neutral way, to meet the community’s modern needs and improves the rider’s experience.

Create more **high frequency service** that expands access and shortens travel time.

Ensure network is integrated with the new East – West Bus Rapid Transit project.

Importance of **advancing racial equity** through transit improvements.

Attracting riders increases revenue and helps with fiscal sustainability.
MCTS NEXT – Route Network Redesign

- Created More High Frequency service
- Expanded Access to unserved and underserved job centers
- Made Route Network Easier to Understand / Faster service

Before NEXT:
40% High Freq.
60% Low Freq.

After NEXT:
60% High Freq.
40% Low Freq.
MCTS NEXT – New High Frequency Network

- Serves More People +47%
- Persons of Color population served +37%
- Senior population served +59%
- Low-Income population served +32%
- Persons with disabilities population served +47%

Represents 20,000 people
East-West Bus Rapid Transit

Legend:
- Stations
- Right travel lane
  Dedicated transit lane in right lane
  next to parking lane
- Mixed traffic
  Transit vehicle shares lane
  with other vehicles
East-West Bus Rapid Transit

**FREQUENCY and RELIABILITY**

- Dedicated Lanes
- Transit Signal Priority
- Enhanced Platforms
- Specialized Vehicles

- Off-board Fare Collection
- Fewer Stops
- Increased Frequency
East-West Bus Rapid Transit

• E-W BRT connects people to jobs, and businesses to their customers
• E-W BRT supports millions of dollars in economic development
• E-2 BRT is cost-effective compared to other transportation options
• E-2 BRT meets a critical need to mitigate traffic congestion

9 colleges and universities
120k jobs
47,000 residents
7 medical facilities
25 hotels

100+ businesses with 250 or more employees

COUNTLESS ATTRACTIONS including the county zoo, Miller Park, Bucks' arena, art museum and Summerfest
# East-West Bus Rapid Transit

**Bringing Enhanced Frequency and Reliability to the Corridor**

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East-West Bus Rapid Transit

- Approval Development: 2016
- Construction: 2021 - 2022
- Begin Service: Fall 2022
SEWRPC, Milwaukee County, and MCTS are analyzing the feasibility of enhancing transit service along and near N. and S. 27th Street.
• Very High ridership (PurpleLine)
• High proportion of population is more likely to use transit
• High Density residential development
• Major Employment corridor
• Easy connections to other high frequency transit routes, including future East-West BRT
23% of households within 0.5 miles from existing stops have no vehicle available.

Nearly 1 in 5 households without a car in Milwaukee County are within a ½ mile of the PurpleLine.
## Transit Demographics

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA ALONG ROUTE 18 (GREENFIELD - NATIONAL) AND PURPLELINE (27TH) BUS ROUTES

9/9/2021

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**NOTE:** Data collected from Remix software. Represents data within a one quarter mile buffer along the route.
Milwaukee County DOT and MCTS are committed to improving economic mobility through innovative transit solutions

Thank You!

MCTS NEXT (ridemcts.com)

East West BRT (eastwestbrtmke.com)

North South Transit Enhancement (mkenorthsouth.com)

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Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census American Community Survey, 2014-18
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