



# Milwaukee County Transit System Short-Range (Five Year) Development Plan



#153975 v1

Recommended Five Year Transit System Development Plan



## Introduction

### Milwaukee County Transit System Development Plan

- A short-range (five year) transit service plan
- Addresses transit system routes, days and hours of service, and service frequency and speed



## *Introduction (continued)*

### Plan recommendations

- Restore and extend transit service throughout Milwaukee County
  - Reconnect to over 40,000 jobs no longer accessible by transit
- Extend transit hours of service on weekdays and weekends
  - Make transit more accessible to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift workers

3



## *Introduction (continued)*

### Plan recommendations (continued)

- Improve the frequency of transit service
  - Make transit service convenient and timely
- Improve the speed of transit service
  - Consider staged implementation of express service

4



## *Introduction (continued)*

### Cooperative staff effort

- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)
- Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS)
- Milwaukee County Department of Transportation and Public Works

5



## *Introduction (continued)*

### Transit Planning Advisory Committee directed and guided preparation of the plan

- Members appointed by the Milwaukee County Executive, including representatives from:
  - Transit-dependent populations, minority groups, and business associations
  - Wisconsin Department of Transportation
  - City and County Public Works Departments
  - Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
  - MCTS

6



## *Introduction (continued)*

### Why Prepare the Plan?

- To identify needed transit system improvement and expansion
- To identify the funding needed to maintain, and improve and expand, the transit system

7



## *Work Completed to Date*

### Transit system performance evaluation

- Generally, good coverage of residential areas and job concentrations in Milwaukee County, but recent service reductions have significantly reduced coverage
- Buses run on-time more than 90% of the time
- Overcrowding is a problem on selected routes during peak periods
- Most local weekday routes have high ridership productivity/cost effectiveness
- MCTS generally outperformed 13 peer transit systems on measures of ridership and financial performance

8



## *Work Completed to Date (continued)*

### Unmet Transit Service Needs

- Unserved Areas: existing routes do not serve some areas in the far west, south, northwest, and northeast portions of County
- Inadequate Service Hours: some bus routes (particularly on weekends) operate for less than 20 hours a day, not providing late night service which would meet the needs of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> shift workers
- Inadequate Service Frequency: many bus routes operate with longer than desirable headways on weekdays (10 minute peak periods, 20 minute off-peak periods) and on weekends (30 minutes)
- Lengthy Travel Times: transit travel time is significantly longer than auto travel time for comparable trips

9



## *Work Completed to Date (continued)*

### Potential High Priority Service Improvements Identified Based Upon Performance Evaluation, Unmet Needs Analysis and Public Comments:

- Extending routes to unserved areas
- Expanding weekday and weekend service hours
- Increasing the frequency of service on major local bus routes and freeway flyer routes
- Reducing transit travel times by adding express bus routes

10



## *Work Completed to Date (continued)*

### Status of Plan

- Early work on plan identified the funding crisis facing the transit system, concluding that dedicated funding would be essential just to preserve the current transit system.
- Staff postponed completion of a recommended plan, and worked with the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors, Coalition for Advancing Transit, and community and business groups attempting to achieve transit dedicated funding State legislation.
- Dedicated transit funding State legislation was not enacted. There is a need to complete the plan to demonstrate the transit system which can be achieved with dedicated funding.

11



## *Recommended Plan: Proposed Service Plan*

- 22 percent expansion in fixed-route service over five years to about 1,628,500 annual bus hours (about 4 percent annually - restores service to year 2000 levels)
  - New Routes and Route Extensions
  - Eliminate Bus Turn-backs on Major Routes
  - Extension of Service Hours
  - Increase Frequency of Bus Service
  - Freeway Flyer Service Expansion
  - Express Bus Service
- Maintain countywide Transit Plus paratransit service, increase service as needed to keep pace with ridership growth, monitor costs

12



## *Recommended Plan: New Routes and Route Extensions*

### Add New Local Routes and Adjust Alignments of Existing Local Bus Routes (see Map 1)

- Extend service to unserved/underserved areas
  - Development along Brown Deer Road
  - Industrial/office parks in Franklin and Oak Creek
  - Village of Hales Corners
- Better coverage in north-central and western portions of the County
- Restore service over routes which have been cut in recent years, including in 2010 budget
- Increase of about 64,000 bus hours annually—about 4 percent over the 1,327,500 bus hours for the bus system in 2010

13



## *Recommended Plan: Eliminate Bus Turn-backs*

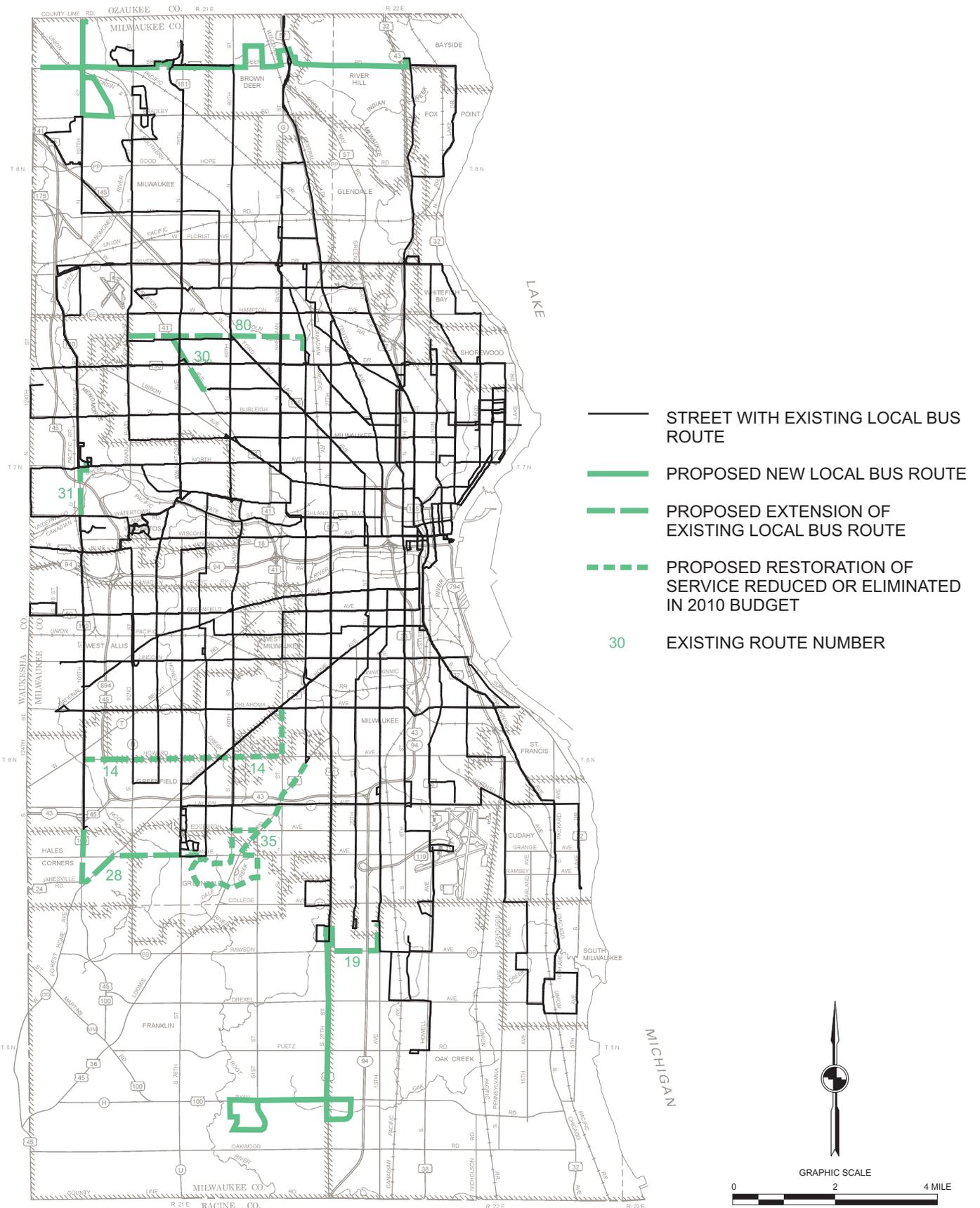
### Eliminate Bus Turn-back Points along Selected Routes (see Map 2)

- Schedules of some routes do not provide for the same service frequency over the entire length of the route
  - Where buses turn back before reaching terminus of route, less frequent service provided over ends of route
- Proposed change would provide consistent service levels over entire length of route
- Turn-backs proposed to be eliminated for Route Nos. 35, 57, and 64
- Increase of about 20,000 bus hours annually—about 1.5 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010

14

# Map 1

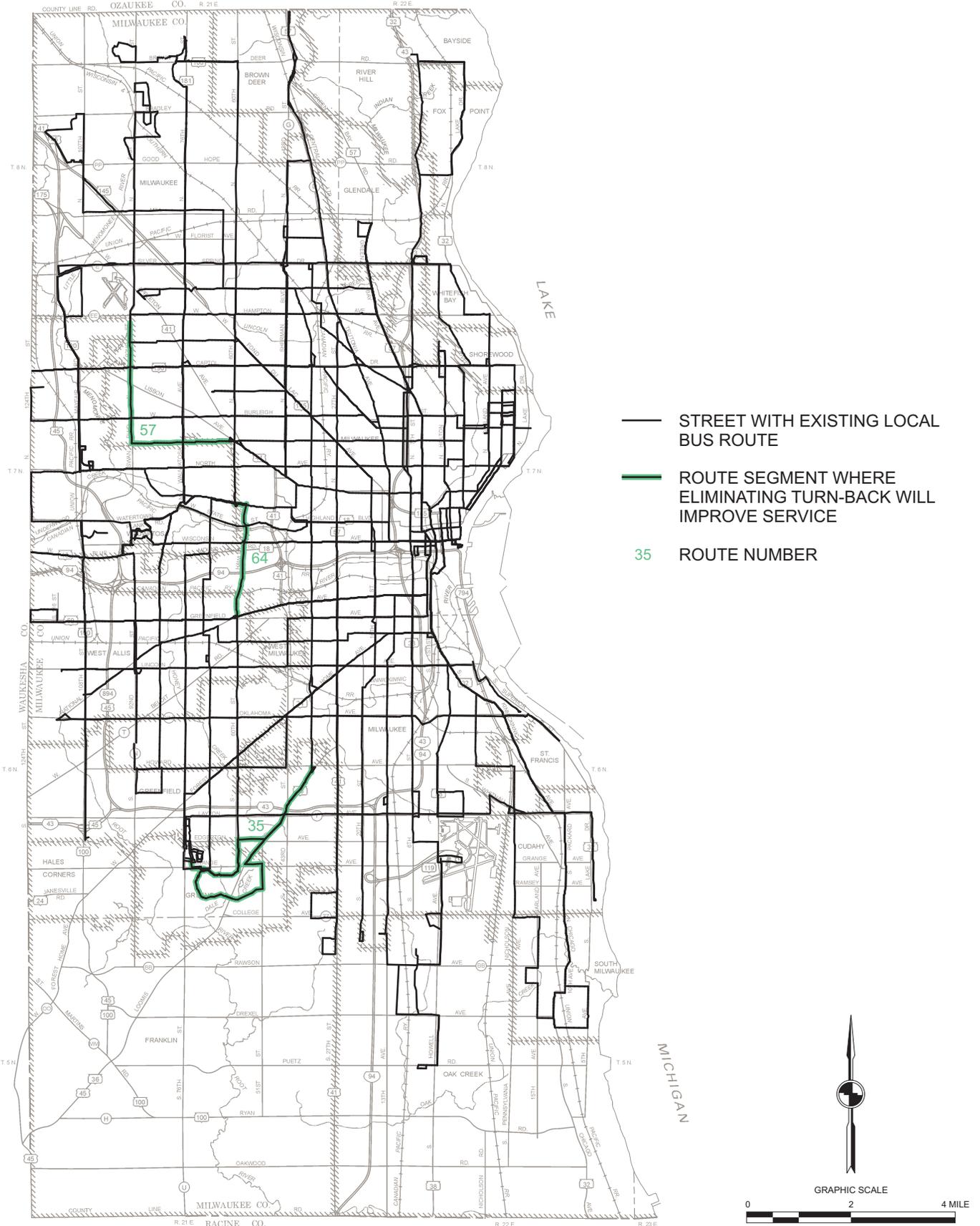
## CHANGES TO LOCAL BUS ROUTES PROPOSED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN



Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.

# Map 2

## LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENTS WHERE TURN-BACKS ARE PROPOSED TO BE ELIMINATED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN



Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.

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## *Recommended Plan: Expanded Hours of Service*

### Expand Weekday and Weekend Hours of Service to Desirable Service Hours (see Map 3)

- Desirable to provide 20 hours of service over all routes--hours that cover most work shifts
  - Most local routes (25 of 30) provide this on weekdays; far less (14 of 30) on Saturdays, and (9 of 29) on Sundays
- Expand service hours on weekdays and weekends on the 15 local routes with highest ridership (in addition to routes converted to express service)
- Increase of about 13,000 bus hours annually—about one percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010

15



## *Recommended Plan: Increased Service Frequency – Local Routes*

### Provide Desirable Service Frequency on Local Routes (see Map 4)

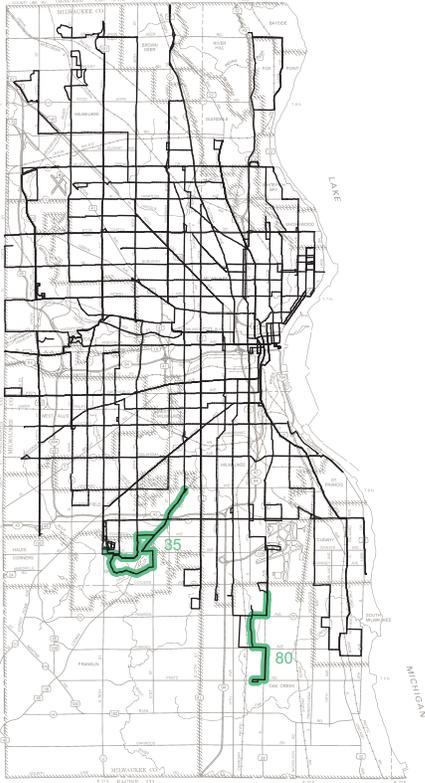
- Desirable service frequency of no more than:
  - 10 minutes for weekday peak periods
  - 20 minutes for weekday off-peak periods
  - 30 minutes on weekends
  - Makes transit more convenient to use, attracts riders; only small area in County with this service
- Increase weekday and weekend service frequency on 15 routes with highest ridership, in addition to routes converted to express service
- Increase of about 118,000 bus hours annually—about 9 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010

16

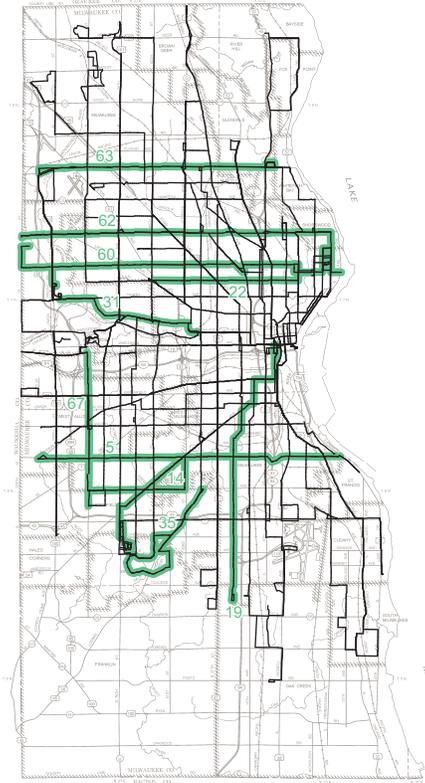
# Map 3

## LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENTS WHERE SERVICE HOURS ARE PROPOSED TO BE EXPANDED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN

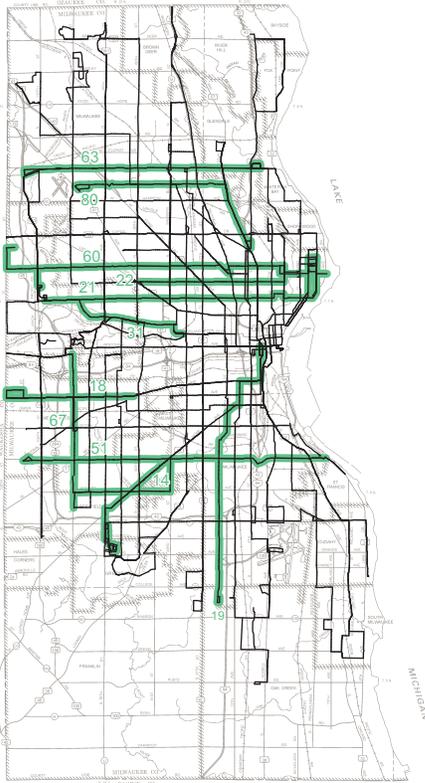
WEEKDAYS



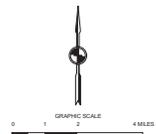
SATURDAYS



SUNDAYS



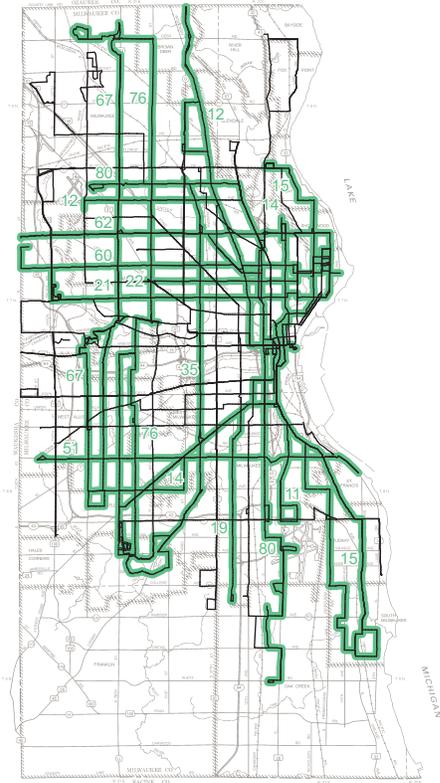
- STREET WITH EXISTING LOCAL BUS ROUTE
- LOCAL ROUTE SEGMENT AFFECTED BY PROPOSED EXPANDED SERVICE HOURS
- 35 ROUTE NUMBER



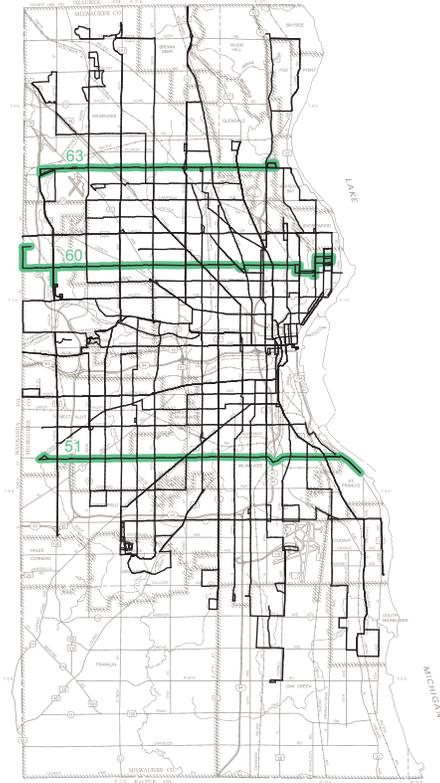
# Map 4

## LOCAL ROUTES WHERE SERVICE FREQUENCY IS PROPOSED TO BE INCREASED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN (OUTSIDE OF EXPRESS BUS CORRIDORS)

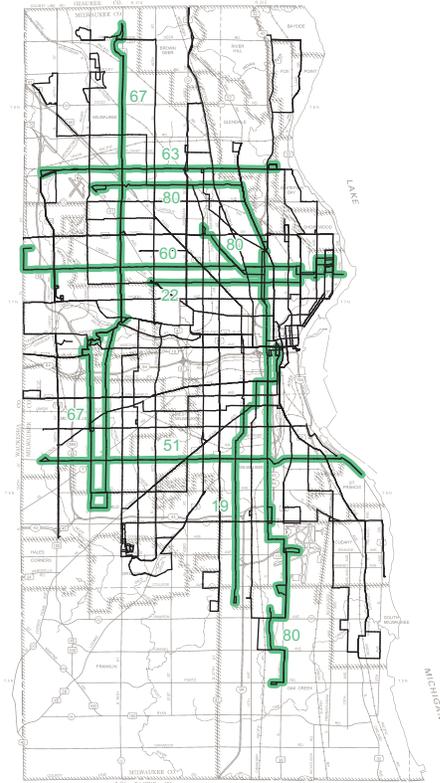
WEEKDAYS



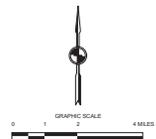
SATURDAYS



SUNDAYS



- STREET WITH EXISTING LOCAL BUS ROUTE
- LOCAL ROUTE AFFECTED BY PROPOSED INCREASE IN SERVICE FREQUENCY
- 80** ROUTE NUMBER





## *Recommended Plan: Increased Service Frequency – Freeway Flyer Service*

- Provide at least 10 bus trips over each route during both morning and afternoon peak periods each weekday
- Limit routes to serving no more than 2 park-ride lots; one new route required
- Increase service levels as needed to ensure that all passengers have a seat
- Add 2 midday round trips to each route
- Increase of about 32,000 bus hours annually—about 2 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010

17



## *Recommended Plan: Express Bus Service*

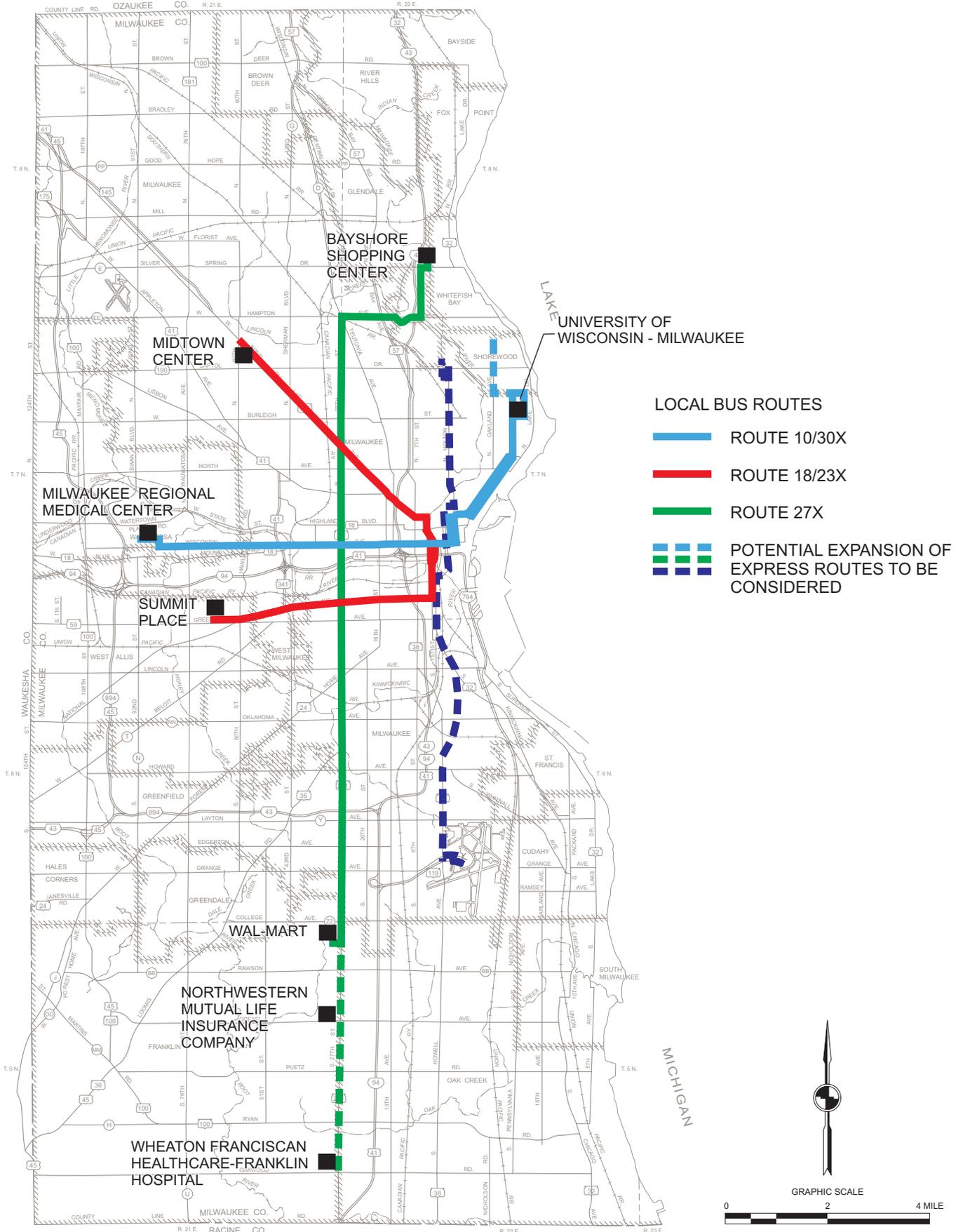
Convert Local Bus Service to Express Bus Service in Three Corridors (see Map 5):

- Over Route Nos. 10 and 30
  - From Milwaukee Regional Medical Center to UWM using Wisconsin, Prospect, Farwell, Oakland, and Kenwood
- Over Route Nos. 18 and 23
  - From Summit Place to Midtown Center using Fond du Lac, McKinley, 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, National, and Greenfield
- Over Route No. 27
  - From Bayshore Town Center to Wal-Mart using Port Washington, Hampton, and 27<sup>th</sup>

18

# Map 5

## EXPRESS BUS ROUTES PROPOSED UNDER THE RECOMMENDED PLAN



Source: Milwaukee County Transit System and SEWRPC.



## *Recommended Plan: Express Bus Service (continued)*

- Potential to add fourth express route serving airport over the entire length of Route No. 11
- Conversion to express service would increase bus operating speed, decrease travel times
  - Eliminate some local bus stops; new stop spacing every quarter mile outside downtown
  - Keep stops used by about 80 percent of current passengers
- Express service to be provided 5:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m. seven days a week with frequent service:
  - 7-10 minutes for weekday peak periods
  - 9-16 minutes for weekday off-peak periods
  - 10-20 minute headways for weekends

19



## *Recommended Plan: Express Bus Service (continued)*

- The local routes converted to express service among the top ridership routes of the system
- Local bus service retained over non-express portions of affected local routes through new or restructured routes
- Increase of about 54,000 bus hours annually—about 4 percent over the total 1,327,500 bus hours in 2010 budget

20



## *Recommended Plan: Potential for Express Bus to become BRT*

Express bus service could be upgraded to bus rapid transit (BRT) service

- Potential enhancements for BRT include
  - Exclusive bus lanes
  - Transit priority at traffic signals
  - Next-bus information displays
  - Buses of a different design or with special markings and paint schemes
  - Specially designed bump-out bus stops with other passenger amenities
- Conversion to BRT could also include route realignments, wider stop spacing, and some underlying local bus service

21



## *Recommended Plan: Potential for Express Bus to become BRT (continued)*

- Two potential BRT routes have been identified
- Funding for Fondy-National BRT Route being pursued



22



## *Recommended Plan: Paratransit Service*

### Maintain Transit Plus Paratransit Service

- Keep countywide service area
- Increase service as needed to keep pace with ridership growth

### Continue recent efforts to promote use of accessible fixed-route bus service

- Provide travel training
- Make improvements to enhance accessibility of bus stops
  - Curb-cuts, concrete pads, shelters, or benches.

23



## *Benefits of Implementing Recommended Plan*

### Benefits of Improved and Expanded Service in the Recommended Plan:

- Provide transit accessibility throughout Milwaukee County
  - Reconnect with transit service over 40,000 jobs
  - Provide service for workers with second and third shift jobs
- Provide faster and more convenient service for existing riders, and attract new riders
  - Reduced wait times for buses
  - Higher speed express bus service

24



## *Benefits of Implementing Recommended Plan (continued)*

- Improved service (reduced wait times, higher speed express bus service) will help attract new transit users
  - Reduce highway traffic and congestion
  - Improve air quality
  - Reduce energy consumption
  - Enhance quality of life by reducing household expenditures on transportation
- Improved service (reduced wait times, higher speed express bus service) will better meet the travel needs of the significant portion of the County population without access to an automobile
  - 16% of total population without access to an automobile
  - 28% of minority population without access to an automobile

25



## *Benefits of Implementing Recommended Plan (continued)*

- Improved public transit service will make Milwaukee County – a metropolitan area with higher density – more attractive for residents and businesses
- Improved public transit will provide a necessary and desirable alternative in the County's most heavily traveled corridors and areas
- Improved public transit is essential to County economic development

26



## *Need for Dedicated Funding*

Analysis of capital and operating funding clearly indicates that current property tax levy would be inadequate to improve and expand the system.

Proposed 0.5% sales tax in Milwaukee County would be sufficient to address a backlog of bus replacement needs and implement the recommended plan, expanding transit service by over 20%, restoring recent service cuts and greatly improving the extent, speed, and convenience of transit service:

- 0.5% sales tax was identified as the preferred funding source by “temporary” and “limited authority” Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transit Authority
- 1.0% sales tax increase for transit, parks, and public safety approved by Milwaukee County electorate in advisory referendum in November 2008

27



## *Need for Dedicated Funding (continued)*

Recent 0.5% sales tax proposals:

- Governor proposed regional transit authority legislation in the 2009-11 State budget, authorizing a 0.5% sales tax for transit in southeastern Wisconsin
- State Legislature rejected Governor’s proposal, separately proposing a KRM commuter rail authority and Milwaukee County transit authority
- Governor vetoed Milwaukee County authority, but kept the KRM commuter rail authority, which is now the Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SERTA)
- In April 2010, another attempt to attain dedicated funding was made, but proposed legislation was not passed by the State Legislature

28



## *Need for Dedicated Funding (continued)*

- Without dedicated local transit funding,
  - Continued reductions in transit service will be implemented
  - Continued increases in transit fares well above the rate of general price inflation will be implemented
  - Need to replace up to 198 buses over the next few years could result in the need for significant reductions in transit service
    - Reduction could be as high as 25 to 35 percent if all 198 buses need to be replaced
    - Number of buses to be replaced will depend on if the fleet is reduced by future service reductions

29



## *Availability of Dedicated Local Transit Funding to Transit Systems in Similar-sized Metropolitan Areas*

Name	2000 Population (in millions)	Source of Local Dedicated Funding
St. Louis, MO	2.08	0.25% Sales tax
Denver, CO	1.98	1.0% Sales tax
Cleveland, OH	1.79	1.0% Sales tax
Pittsburgh, PA	1.75	Sales tax
Portland, OR	1.58	0.6618% payroll tax
Cincinnati, OH	1.50	0.3% payroll tax
Norfolk, VA	1.39	--
Sacramento, CA	1.39	0.5% Sales tax
Kansas City, MO	1.36	0.375% Sales tax
San Antonio, TX	1.33	0.5% Sales tax
Las Vegas, NV	1.31	0.25% Sales tax
Milwaukee, WI	1.31	--
Indianapolis, IN	1.22	--
Providence, RI	1.18	6.25 cents per gallon gas tax
Columbus, OH	1.13	0.25% Sales tax
New Orleans, LA	1.01	1.0% Sales tax
Buffalo, NY	0.98	0.125% Sales tax
Memphis, TN	0.97	--
Austin, TX	0.90	1.0% Sales tax
Salt Lake City, UT	0.89	Sales tax
Jacksonville, FL	0.88	1.0% Sales tax
Louisville, KY	0.86	0.2% payroll tax
Charlotte, NC	0.76	0.5% Sales tax

30