

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

W239 N1812 ROCKWOOD DRIVE • PO BOX 1607 • WAUKESHA, WI 53187-1607

TELEPHONE (262) 547-6721  
FAX (262) 547-1103

Serving the Counties of:

KENOSHA  
MILWAUKEE  
OZAUKEE  
RACINE  
WALWORTH  
WASHINGTON  
WAUKESHA

April 12, 2019

Mr. Thomas Winter  
Director of Schedule and Planning  
Milwaukee County Transit System  
1942 N. 17th Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Mr. Winter:

The staff of Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Milwaukee Urbanized Area, supports the transit route redesign being proposed by the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), hereafter referred to as MCTS NEXT.

As part of its role as the official areawide planning agency for Southeastern Wisconsin, SEWRPC prepared VISION 2050, a long-range land use and transportation plan that provides recommendations to local and State governments to shape and guide land use development and transportation improvements, including public transit. As identified in VISION 2050, improved public transit enhances the attractiveness of and increases opportunity in the Region, particularly for those residents without cars, by providing greater access to jobs, healthcare, education, and other daily needs.

Adopted in July 2016, VISION 2050 recommends increasing the speed, frequency, and coverage of public transit service in the Region, including in Milwaukee County. Without a significant increase in funding for public transit, fully implementing the recommendations in VISION 2050 is not possible. However, given the limited funds currently available, progress on the recommendations in VISION 2050 will best be made by focusing on providing the quickest and most frequent service possible in the best performing higher-density corridors, while working with partner entities to provide the coverage recommended in VISION 2050 with smaller vehicles such as vans and taxis. MCTS NEXT supports the implementation of VISION 2050 by providing more high frequency bus routes and increasing transit service in busy corridors, focusing on providing the highest quality transit service possible given limited resources.

Redesigning a bus network with limited funding requires making trade-offs between the amount of areas served and the frequency of the transit service to benefit the greatest number of transit riders. MCTS riders are more likely to be minority, low-income, or people with disabilities than their overall proportion of the County population. While striking the appropriate balance is a challenge, the improvements in frequency resulting from MCTS NEXT will benefit nearly all MCTS riders, including minority populations, lower-income populations, and people with disabilities.

MCTS NEXT would implement transit planning and operations best practices employed nationally and internationally. Bus network redesigns have been successfully completed by a number of transit agencies such as in Houston, Columbus, Jacksonville, and Orange County, stabilizing ridership and increasing

Mr. Thomas Winter  
April 12, 2019  
Page 2

destinations. MCTS NEXT was developed through extensive public involvement, including three formal rounds of public outreach, a virtual open house, a Spanish language open house, and an interactive map and online comment form to gather input on the proposed routes and levels of service.

In summary, SEWRPC supports MCTS NEXT, as it aligns with the long-range land use and transportation plan, VISION 2050; would implement a system that provides more frequent service on major travel corridors; and provides improved access to jobs, education, and other daily needs within Milwaukee County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin J. Muhs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "K" and "M".

Kevin J. Muhs, PE, AICP  
Executive Director

KJM/CTH/JBS  
#247751v3 – MCTS NEXT Letter of Support April 2019

cc: Donna Brown-Martin, Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation  
Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Chairman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
William Drew, Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission  
Daniel Boehm, President and Managing Director, Milwaukee County Transit System  
Jeff Sponcia, Manager of Planning, Milwaukee County Transit System