



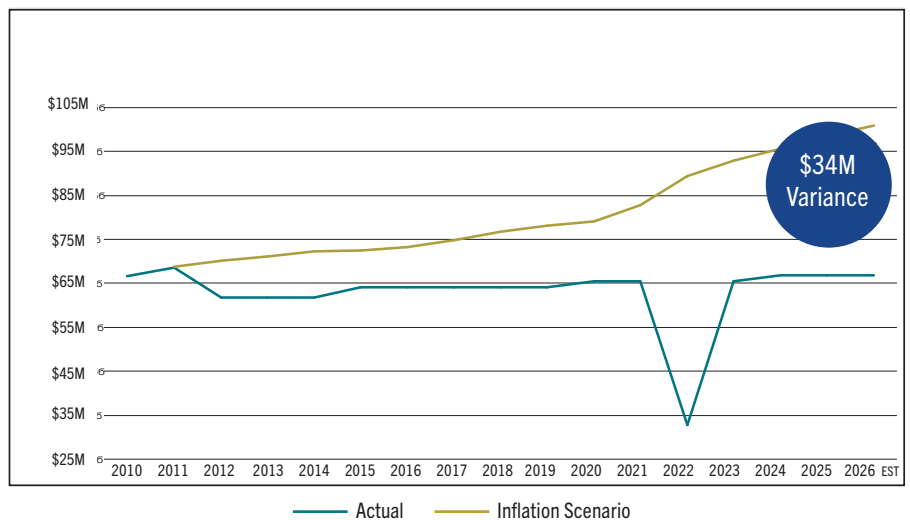
# Driving Economic Growth Across Wisconsin: The Need for Sustainable Transit Funding

## MCTS OPERATES WITHOUT SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is a critical part of Southeast Wisconsin's transportation network, saving the region hundreds of millions of dollars each year through avoided costs, reducing workforce transportation barriers, easing congestion, and supporting tourism. However, the system still lacks sustainable funding that keeps pace with inflation.

## STATE FUNDING IS LOWER THAN IN 2011 AND NO LONGER SUPPORTS BASIC OPERATIONAL NEEDS

After a cut in state transit funding in 2011, annual allocations have never recovered. At the same time, costs like fuel, bus maintenance and wages have risen substantially. **In 2026, MCTS is effectively underfunded by \$34 million in state support, without tools to raise additional revenue.** Since August 2025, MCTS has already implemented 170,000 hours — or 15% — service cuts. Without new revenue, the system faces an additional 25% in cuts.



## SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN'S WORKFORCE RELIES HEAVILY ON TRANSIT

**13%**  
of Milwaukee County  
households don't have a  
vehicle

In Milwaukee County  
**1 in 5**  
working age residents  
don't drive

**58%**  
of frequent riders  
use MCTS to get to  
work

## HOW WE CAN PROTECT THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

We need a stable, dedicated funding model that:

1. Keeps pace with inflation
2. Protects riders and commuters from budget swings
3. Reflects MCTS's true regional impact
4. Supports reliable service for workers and employers

## Connect With Us

Work with us to build a funding model that supports Wisconsin's workforce, employers, and economic growth at [bdeneve@mcts.org](mailto:bdeneve@mcts.org).



# Driving Economic Growth Across Wisconsin: How MCTS Benefits the Regional Transportation Network

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) saves the region at least \$366 million a year on avoided crashes, reduced congestion and delays, vehicle operation costs, and emissions and health-related costs, supports workforce growth, strengthens business operations, and keeps the transportation system functioning for everyone.

## TRANSIT CUTS REDUCE OPTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES

Lack of transportation is a major obstacle to employment in Wisconsin, especially in Milwaukee County where a significant percentage of the workforce does not drive or does not have access to a vehicle.

# #1

reason riders use  
MCTS to get to work

# 386K

jobs accessible by  
MCTS bus service

## WITHOUT TRANSIT, AREA TRAFFIC WILL CONTINUE TO GET WORSE

Congestion in the Milwaukee area has been getting worse. 120,000 people commute in and out of Milwaukee County each day. By reducing the number of cars, MCTS improves traffic flow on major roadways, including I-94 and I-43, and avoids hundreds of crashes per year. Cuts to transit would have a significant impact on daily commutes, including:

Would see a  

# 22%

  
increase in severe  
congestion

Drivers would face  

# 25K

  
more hours in traffic  
per weekday

Up to  

# 900

  
more crashes per  
year

## TRANSIT BOOSTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Affordable transportation options are crucial to the regional economy. MCTS is focusing on increasing services to major events and high-frequency corridors that support stronger retail sales, increased foot traffic, higher development value, reduced parking demand and lower project costs.

### Summerfest 2026

MCTS provided 61,896 one-way rides and 30,948 round-trip bus rides among the park-and-rides.

### High-Frequency Service

- The new CONNECT 1 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor has already attracted new business investment.
- MCTS has been awarded \$21 million in federal funding to invest in the PurpleLine Corridor.

### Return on Investment

# 5-to-1

  
economic return  
produced by long-  
term investment in  
public transit

### Getting People to Work

Nearly 50 employers participate in MCTS Commuter Value Pass programs, providing low-cost commute options to 1,500+ workers.

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