

Updated MCTS Questions & Answers Regarding the Affects of the State Budget for 2011-2013

Q: How will the 2011-2013 State Budget affect MCTS?

A: The State Budget decreases Wisconsin public transportation funding by 10%. For MCTS specifically, it will lose \$6.8 million in State aid in both 2012 and 2013. To put this in perspective, Milwaukee County contributed about \$17 million dollars in operating funding for the system in 2011. It would have to raise its levy for transit by more than 40% in order to make up this loss. That is highly unlikely, given the fact that the budget also limits the amount that the local tax levy can be increased and would require a new referendum to enact a separate tax for transit.

Transit is an important part of our transportation infrastructure. It is an essential element for those who do not or cannot drive. It also provides economic relief for those trying to reduce their overall household expenses. The reduction in funding will have a detrimental effect on our community.

Q: How does this affect paratransit service?

A: The Milwaukee County Transit System is dedicated to providing paratransit service to our community for those unable to use the bus system. No cuts are easy, but due to the decision by the Governor and State Legislature to reduce transit funds by 10%, we have to look at all areas. By law we are required to provide this service as part of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. However, because paratransit service is part of the overall transit services which we provide, it may be affected.

Federal law requires transit systems to provide paratransit service within 3/4 of a mile of fixed-route service during the same times buses are in operation. Currently MCTS is able to go beyond this 3/4 of a mile requirement to the borders of Milwaukee County, however, the provision of this additional service is expensive. This will have to be reviewed as we review cuts to the overall transit system.

If we have to reduce the fixed route system by 12% this year, that will be roughly a 35% reduction in the fixed route system over an 11 year period. We are trying hard to consider all riders including those who use the bus system such as students, seniors, individuals with disabilities, workers and others. We've been fortunate to have made

little change to paratransit services over the past 11 years which cost about \$27 for each van ride. We need to spread out the cuts in order to keep the integrity of both services.

Q: What bus services will be cut?

A: The State's action in cutting transit funding by \$6.8 million is unprecedented and will have a profound impact on all transit services.

Service cuts and fare increases are always our last resort, but with a funding reduction of this size and rapidly escalating fuel prices, significant service reductions will be required. It is estimated that roughly a 12% reduction in service might be required to stay within our budget. This would require a reduction of approximately 158,000 hours of service in 2012.

MCTS is currently reviewing all options, both in internal operations and in service cuts, to meet these challenges. No final decision has been made, but some of the services that are being reviewed are listed below:

- Cut all Freeway Flyer service (not UBUS)
- No bus service to Summerfest/other Festivals/State Fair/Brewers
- Elimination of Routes 50, 85, 87, 88 and 89
- Service frequency reductions on Rts. 21, 22, 23, 30, 53, 55, 60, 62 & 63

Q. Will fares increase?

A: The preliminary transit 2012 budget plan includes a \$1.25 fare increase for paratransit service. There is no decision at this time on the fixed route bus system.

