

## Milwaukee County North-South Transit Enhancement Study

### PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

## Chapter 1

# INTRODUCTION

Milwaukee County recognized a need to invest in the 27th Street area as the corridor is home to some of the most concentrated areas of underrepresented populations in the Milwaukee area, which is among the most racially segregated metro areas in the Nation. A transit investment in this corridor aligns with Milwaukee County's 2019 declaration of racism as a public health crisis and its commitment to addressing the root causes of racial inequities.

Milwaukee County requested assistance from the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) to complete the Milwaukee North-South Transit Enhancement Study. The study will look at the feasibility of providing enhanced bus and rail transit options in the 27th Street area of Milwaukee County to decrease transit passenger travel times, increase service frequency, add amenities, and potentially expand the existing MCTS network to better serve the neighborhoods, people, businesses, and transit users in the corridor and across the County. A transit investment in the 27th Street area could be a catalyst for development and job growth within the corridor, and areas outside of the corridor by also providing improved transit connections to other, recent transit enhancement investments in the County.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the schedule, partners, tools, and tasks required to provide information to and receive feedback from local elected officials, decision makers, stakeholders, and the public regarding the Milwaukee North-South Transit Enhancement Study. This PIP includes the series of decisions and documents where public engagement and input is essential for approval of a transit investment in this corridor.

SEWRPC and Milwaukee County will solicit input from local governments, stakeholders, and the public as the County considers the development and evaluation of alternative transit enhancements and the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the investment in the North-South Corridor. After the LPA is identified in late 2021, Milwaukee County will submit a request to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to enter project development, which will include an environmental study and the design of the system, followed by construction of the LPA.

07/15/2021

At the conclusion of the study, the study team will prepare a summary of public engagement, which will document the outreach that was conducted and summarize the input that was received.

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# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The goal of engagement for the North-South Corridor Transit Enhancement Study is to ensure the chosen transit alternative reflects the transportation needs of the corridor residents and employers by communicating project information and considering input from key project stakeholders including elected officials, community organizations, businesses, local transportation officials, neighbors, and other interested parties from the public.

The goals of public engagement for the study are to:

- Provide clear and transparent information regarding the decision-making process and decisions to all stakeholders
- Provide preliminary information and alternative analyses to stakeholders for input prior to making the final decision
- Communicate back to the project stakeholders regarding their input and decisions
- Ensure outreach to underserved populations is comprehensive and feedback is considered
- Meet all necessary Federal requirements and obtain the necessary information and approvals to submit a request to the FTA to enter project development after the study has concluded

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# STUDY TEAMS AND COMMITTEES

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Project Management Team (PMT) will be comprised of members from Milwaukee County, Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS), and SEWRPC. Decisions regarding the project and required documentation for the study will be produced and reviewed by this team and will be provided to Milwaukee County for approval. The members of the PMT include:

- Julie Esch, Deputy Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation
- John Rodgers, Senior Manager Grants Compliance, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation
- Dan Basile, Chief Operations Officer, MCTS
- Tom Winter, Director of Scheduling and Planning, MCTS
- Jeff Sponcia, Planning Manager, MCTS
- Brittany Bertsch, Project Manager, MCTS
- David Locher, Transportation Manager, MCTS
- Jacqueline Zeledon, Community Outreach & Internal Communications Coordinator, MCTS
- Kevin Muhs, Executive Director, SEWRPC
- Chris Hiebert, Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC
- Carrie Cooper, Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC
- Liz Callin, Senior Transportation Planner, SEWRPC
- Nikki Payne, Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC
- Jennifer Sarnecki, Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be comprised of Business Improvements Districts, Neighborhood Improvement Districts, other community organizations and stakeholders within the existing corridor and future alternative alignments. The CAC will review documents, handouts and information prior to outreach meetings and will serve as a liaison back to the group they represent to ensure accurate project information is conveyed and feedback is collected. The CAC is encouraged to invite the study team to present latest study information to their constituents. Invited members of the CAC include:

- Cheryl Blue, Executive Director, 30th Street Industrial Corridor Corporation, Inc.
- Karyn Rotker, Poverty, Race & Civil Liberties Project Attorney, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Wisconsin Foundation
- Markasa Tucker, Director, African American Roundtable
- Mike Bautch, Vice President, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 998
- Mario Mireles, Senior General Manager, Bayshore
- Dr. Patricia McManus, President & CEO, Black Health Coalition
- James Davis, Executive Director, Bublr Bikes
- Yvonne McCaskill, Coordinator, Century City Triangle Neighborhood Association
- Dr. Patricia Najera, Executive Director, Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative
- Chytania Brown, CEO, Employ Milwaukee
- Marjorie Rucker, Ethnic and Diverse Business Coalition
- Joe Tesch, Forest County Potawatomi Community
- Kiatoukaysy Lo Neng, Executive Director, Hmong American Friendship Center
- Brian Peters, Community Access & Policy Specialist, IndependenceFirst
- Dennis Grzezinski, Attorney, Law Office of Dennis Grzezinski
- Catrina Crane, Director of Workforce, Menomonee Valley Neighborhood Association
- Barbara Little and Adele Nance, MICAH Transportation Taskforce, MICAH
- Teri Zywicki, CEO and President, Milwaukee Center for Independence
- Nick DeMarsh, Milwaukee Transit Riders Union
- Dr. Eve Hall, President & CEO, Milwaukee Urban League
- Fred Royal, President, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Lindsay St. Arnold Bell, Associate Director, Near West Side Partners, Inc.
- Robin Reese, Manager, North Avenue Marketplace
- Sarah Bregant, Urban Planning Specialist, Northwest Side CDC
- David Steele, Executive Director, Regional Transit Leadership Council
- Tara Cavazos, Executive Director, South 27th Street Business Association
- Tammy L. Rivera, Executive Director, Southside Organizing Center
- Dr. Jie Yu, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Dr. Robert Schneider, Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Brianna Sas-Perez, Executive Director, VIA
- Melody McCurtis, Deputy Director of Priorities/ Organizer, Metcalfe Park Community Bridges

#### **TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be made up of representatives from local governments along the corridor, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the PMT. Members of the TAC include:

- Jeffrey Polenske, Commissioner of Public Works, City of Milwaukee
- Tanya Fonseca, Long Range Planning Manager, City of Milwaukee
- Aaron Hertzberg, Director of Economic Development, Milwaukee County
- Denise Wandke, Director of Transportation, MCTS

- Nate Piotrowski, Community Services Director, Village of Brown Deer
- Matthew Maederer, Director of Public Works/Village Engineer, Village of Brown Deer
- Todd Stuebe, Director of Community Development, City of Glendale
- Charlie Imig, Director of Public Works, City of Glendale
- Heath Eddy, Planning Manager, City of Franklin
- Glen Morrow, City Engineer/Director of Public Works, City of Franklin
- Doug Seymour, Director of Community Development, City of Oak Creek
- Mike Simmons, City Engineer, City of Oak Creek
- Jeff Katz, City Engineer and Director of Neighborhood Services, City of Greenfield
- Mark Kane, Community Planner, FTA
- Mitch Batuzich, Transportation Planner, FHWA
- Ian Ritz, Chief, Transit Section, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Dewayne Johnson, Director, Southeast Region, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
- Tony Barth, Systems Planning Chief, Southeast Region, Wisconsin Department of Transportation

#### **UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS/TITLE VI**

Several organizations that work closely with and advocate for Title VI population groups and people with disabilities are invited members of the Community Advisory Committee. The study team will reach out to other underrepresented groups in the area to ensure study information is shared, and the concerns and feedback from the groups are considered as the study progresses.

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# MEETINGS

### **PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Three rounds of public information meetings, virtual or in-person as appropriate, with any in-person meetings taking place along the corridor. The following list includes the anticipated meetings, the information the study team will present, and feedback the study team will invite:

- First public meeting series (February 2021): Information to be provided for feedback at this first round of public meetings includes background and introduction to the corridor, the study steps and schedule, initial range of alternatives and draft purpose and need factors.
- Second public meeting series (June 2021): At these meetings, after the comments from the first round are considered, the team will request feedback on the revised purpose and need factors, the range of alternatives, and preliminary analyses of the range of alternatives.
- Third public meeting series (September 2021): At this final set of public meetings, the study team will request feedback regarding the analyses of the remaining alternatives and will ask for comments regarding the preliminary recommended alternative.
- Post third public meeting series (through end of 2021): The study team will refine and finalize the recommended alternative. The study team will present the recommended alternative to local city and village boards and councils in anticipation of board resolutions regarding a locally preferred alternative. After this step has been completed, the study team will prepare a packet of information for submittal to request the FTA to enter project development. Once approved, Milwaukee County will work to secure future funding for the environmental, design, and construction phases of the project.

### **GROUP MEETINGS**

The study team will present to stakeholder groups such as neighborhood groups, businesses, and other local community meetings as requested.

### **BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The project study team will provide study updates to local governments' councils, boards and subcommittees including Milwaukee County's Transportation, Public Works and Transit (TPWT) committee, city council meetings, and village board meetings.

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# PARTNERS AND OUTREACH TOOLS

In addition to the public meetings, the study team will utilize a team of community partners and other tools to engage stakeholders during the study:

### COMMUNITY PARTNERS

In May 2021, SEWRPC initiated a partnership with community- and neighborhood-based organizations who have a longstanding presence in underserved neighborhoods in the corridor. Through an agreement that includes payment for services, the community partners will assist the study team in providing outreach along and near 27th Street. The community partners will help develop outreach materials and provide study information, such as study fact sheets and handouts, via neighborhood mail drops and at local festivals, farmer's markets, or other community events. The community partners will assist in conducting surveys along and near 27th Street, including a PurpleLine bus stop survey, and will attend the study public meetings to be available for residents' questions and comments. The following organizations have partnered with SEWRPC for the study:

- Metcalfe Park Community Bridges
- Near West Side Partners
- VIA, formerly known as Layton Boulevard West Neighbors
- Northwest Side Community Development Corporation
- Century City Triangle Neighborhood Association
- Clarke Square Neighborhood Initiative

### EMAIL LISTS AND PROJECT CONTACTS

Contact via email will be used to provide residents and interested parties with notifications regarding local planning initiatives and projects. The study team will use the following email lists to provide updates about the study.

- SEWRPC Email List: SEWRPC maintains an email list of those interested in planning efforts in Southeastern Wisconsin. The study team will send public meeting alerts to those on the email list who are within Milwaukee County.

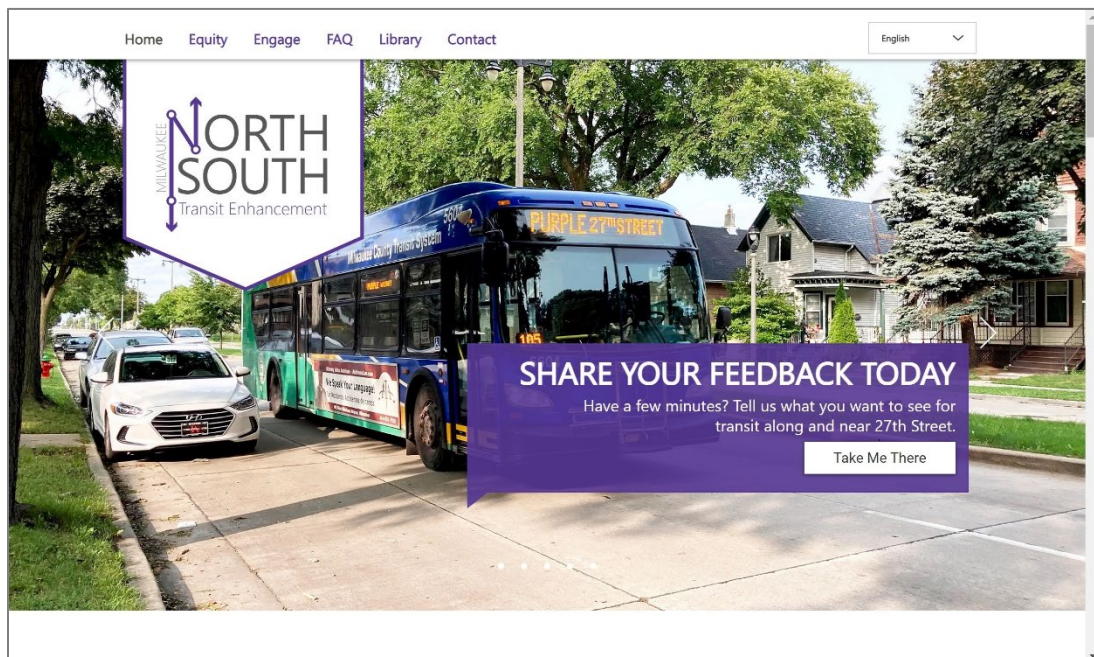


- Study Contact List: People who visit the study website, [mkenorthsouth.com](https://mkenorthsouth.com), can request to stay updated on the study by providing their email address, and the study team will include them in study updates and announcements. Anyone who registers for any of the virtual public meetings for the study will also be added to the study contact list.
- E-Notify List: Milwaukee County, the City of Milwaukee, and Milwaukee Public Schools send notices out to individuals who sign up for the E-Notify alerts by providing their email addresses. The study team will send study alerts to those on the E-Notify list.

## STUDY WEBSITE

The study website, [mkenorthsouth.com](https://mkenorthsouth.com), will be developed in both English and Spanish. Information provided on the website will include a **Home** page, an **Equity** page that provides statistics and background on the equity focus of the study, an **Engage** page where various surveys and information regarding upcoming meetings will be posted, a Frequently Asked Questions (**FAQ**) page where questions and answers about the study are provided, a **Library** section where study documents and study fact sheets will be available for review or download, and a **Contact** section where public comments regarding the study can be provided, people can sign up for updates on the study, and they can directly email the study team at [info@mkenorthsouth.com](mailto:info@mkenorthsouth.com). A screenshot of the initial website Home page is shown in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1: Screenshot of Project Website Home Page**



The study website will be updated as new information is available by posting updated or new documents and maps of study alternatives for comment. The maps will be shared either as an image or with a link to a website by Remix, a transit mapping software that allows for exploring transit routes and stops and

providing comments on specific locations on the maps. In addition, announcements and registration for upcoming public meetings will be posted on the Home page with a link to the appropriate registration page. Visitors to the website can sign up for the study contact list. The study website will be available in both English and Spanish ([es.mkenorthsouth.com](http://es.mkenorthsouth.com)) and will be compatible for viewing on a desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

It is Milwaukee County's intention to maintain the website URL ([mkenorthsouth.com](http://mkenorthsouth.com)) and email address ([info@mkenorthsouth.com](mailto:info@mkenorthsouth.com)) for consistency throughout future phases of the project.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

SEWRPC publishes a newsletter, Regional Planning News, and study information will be included as appropriate. The study team will offer to provide newsletter or magazine articles for publications from other groups including local municipalities, MCTS, community organizations and local elected officials.

## **WRITTEN AND SPOKEN COMMENTS**

The study team will maintain a database that will include compilation of written comments received via email, spoken comments from the public involvement meetings, or those reported and recorded during other public engagement activities. Themes of the summaries of comments will be prepared and presented at public involvement meetings. In addition, a draft Public Involvement Summary document will be provided during the study and the final summary document will be available at the end of the study.

## **SPANISH AND AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL)**

The study team will ensure that public meeting materials such as PowerPoints, flyers, and fact sheets are available in Spanish. Public meetings will have live Spanish and ASL interpreters in attendance to assist anyone who requires those services to participate and provide feedback during the public meetings without having to request a special accommodation. Recordings of the public meetings with an ASL interpreter and in Spanish will be available on the study website for viewing on demand. In addition, the study website has English and Spanish language options.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE**

SEWRPC and MCTS have social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter and updates regarding the study will be periodically posted on those accounts. TAC and CAC members, local municipalities, and the community partners will be encouraged to post study updates to their social media accounts as well. To expedite and simplify the process, the study team will share pre-written social media posts and graphics for easy posting to Facebook and Twitter.

## **BUS STOP SURVEYS**

To share information and gather feedback from current transit users, the community partners will conduct a bus stop survey at existing PurpleLine bus stops with the highest ridership along the corridor prior to

the completion of the Tier 1 analysis. To supplement the in-person survey effort, signs were also posted at high-ridership stops with information about the study and a QR code that would link to an online survey that could be completed using a smart phone.

Another study survey may be conducted later in the study, prior to the selection of a locally preferred alternative, to gather input on potential recommended alternatives including transit technologies, routes, and station locations.

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**STUDY SCHEDULE**

Figure 6.1 depicts the study schedule that includes public engagement activities as well as the timing of technical analyses. The study is expected to be completed in December 2021.

**Figure 6.1: Study Schedule**