
**EAST
WEST BRT**
a feasibility study

MILWAUKEE COUNTY EAST-WEST BUS RAPID TRANSIT

Public Engagement Plan

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Public Engagement Plan is to outline the tasks related to public participation that will be undertaken by Milwaukee County, its study partners and consultant team in executing this feasibility study. The study team will develop an evaluation framework and provide a technical approach to identify and refine the East-West Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Throughout this study, Milwaukee County and its partners will consider input from the public and use stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts to assist in this effort. This document outlines aspects of the public engagement program, including Title VI compliance, managing logistics, preparing materials for meetings and events, preparing Web-based content, and developing social media content.

2. BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County is studying the feasibility of evaluating bus rapid transit (BRT) in an east-west corridor connecting downtown Milwaukee and the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, and serving major employers and activity centers in the corridor. Existing transit service within the Milwaukee area is almost entirely provided by buses on local routes with frequent, closely-spaced stops, no traffic signal preferential treatment, and in mixed traffic subject to traffic congestion.

Current transit travel speeds are much slower, and travel times are much greater, than the private automobile, and therefore transit service is not viewed as an attractive option, and is not used for the vast majority of trips in the county, including within the East-West corridor. For those without access to a private automobile, excessively long travel times via transit effectively results in a lack of access to jobs, healthcare, education, and other elements of daily life.

Bus rapid transit in this corridor with express stop spacing, traffic signal preferential treatment, and exclusive lane operation separated from vehicle traffic and congestion could provide public transit service that is competitive with automobile travel times and speeds.

3. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The study will embrace a participatory approach to public and community engagement that directly engages the key stakeholders (community organizations, employers, transportation agencies, elected officials and others) in the region and ensures that the broader regional public is informed and involved.

This public engagement plan must keep pace with the study's accelerated schedule, and is focused on outreach that solicits timely input from stakeholders throughout the corridor. The public engagement plan has the following goals:

- Gather meaningful input at critical milestones from a broad range of stakeholders,
- Provide clear and understandable study information,
- Demonstrate a transparent decision-making process to select a preferred alternative,
- Meet federal public engagement requirements, including Title VI, through outreach to traditionally underserved populations such as minorities, low-income, disabled and elderly groups , and
- Support the study schedule.

4. STAKEHOLDERS, PARTICIPANTS, AND AUDIENCES

This section outlines key participants and audiences the plan will specifically engage throughout the duration of the East-West BRT feasibility study.

4.1 Project Management Team

The Project Management Team will meet bi-weekly for the duration of the study. The primary role of the project management team is the overall management of study development, evaluation and outreach. Team members include the following:

- Milwaukee County DOT: Brian Dranzik, James Martin, John Rodgers
- MCTS: Dan Boehm, Sandra Kellner, Dan Basile, Jeff Sponcia, Brendan Conway, Tim Hosch, Mark Stein, Tom Winter
- SEWRPC: Kevin Muhs, Ken Yunker
- AECOM Team: Dan Meyers, Carrie Cooper, Julia Suprock, Caron Kloser, Ashley Booth, Gavin Poindexter

4.2 Stakeholder Advisory Group

The Stakeholder Advisory Group will meet up to four key times during the study to review deliverables, and provide comments and policy guidance. This will give key advisors a preview of study materials before being presented to the general public, as well as an opportunity to reflect on and consider input garnered from these important outreach meetings. The Stakeholder Advisory Group is expected to represent the following key study partners:

- Milwaukee County
- Milwaukee County Transit Services
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation

- Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
- City of Milwaukee
- City of Wauwatosa
- Milwaukee Regional Medical Center
- Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District (BID 21)
- Marquette University
- MetroGO!
- American Civil Liberties Union
- Wisconsin Urban and Rural Transit Association

4.3 Third Party Stakeholders

Milwaukee County, its partners and the study team will compile a list of groups and key individuals with an interest in transit, the corridor, jobs, economy and the outcome of the study. The study team will request that these individuals and groups use their existing communication networks to convey messages about study milestones and opportunities for input into the study. Examples of groups to be contacted include the Milwaukee Urban League, Hmong Friendship Association, Independence First, Milwaukee Transit Riders Union, Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce, Westtown Association, and Marquette University.

4.4 Title VI Groups

Consideration of Milwaukee County's Title VI public participation plan is included in the East-West BRT outreach efforts. We will implement and document activities that demonstrate outreach to, and inclusion of minorities, low-income groups, elderly, persons with limited English proficiency and persons with disabilities. Web-based materials will be compatible with visually-impaired and hearing-impaired guidelines. Outreach will include contact with Title VI representatives such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Milwaukee Urban League, United Migrant Opportunity Services, Independence First, Hmong Friendship Association and others.

5. OUTREACH METHODS

With the understanding of the critical timeline to achieve study goals, the overall strategy of public engagement for this study is to focus on key strategies discussed below.

5.1 Public Information Meetings

Two rounds of public information meetings will provide important and timely information, with a round meaning two public information meetings (PIM) with the same information at two locations in the corridor. The study team will hold meetings at two different locations so focused discussions can be held in downtown and at the west end of the corridor. The meeting sites will be accessible via MCTS bus routes. As needed, interpreters can be provided. In addition, the PIM content will be available online for public review.

The first round of PIMs will be in mid-April 2016 and the second round in early June 2016 near study completion. The first round of meetings will give the public an opportunity to learn about bus rapid transit and provide input on issues to consider as the study team develops and evaluates alternatives. At this first public meeting, it will be important to convey that the project team is soliciting timely feedback to identify important issues influencing the alternatives that the team develops. The public meeting will promote the use of online information so interested stakeholders including residents, businesses, major institutions, agencies, elected officials, and others can stay connected and informed about study progress.

The second round of public meetings will present the results of the alternatives evaluation and the draft study recommendations. This second round of meetings will provide the public an opportunity to provide input on the recommendations prior to Milwaukee County's final decisions.

5.2 Stakeholder Advisory Group

The study team will assemble the Stakeholder Advisory Group at decision milestones, which includes providing input prior to, and after public involvement meetings. The study team will prepare study handouts and presentation materials for advisory meetings to clearly convey work progress and needed decisions to advance the study.

5.3 Individual and Group Meetings

The study team will conduct up to 10 individual and group meetings with key stakeholders to focus on issues of specific concern. Stakeholder groups may include representatives from the community, elected officials, transit users and Title VI populations. It will be important for Milwaukee County, its partners and the study team to quickly identify stakeholders for individual outreach. These meetings can be effective tools to quickly uncover and help resolve important issues.

Examples of Individual Stakeholder meetings could include the Milwaukee Regional Medical Center, UWM – Innovation Campus, Marquette University, the African-American Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Westown Association, Milwaukee Transit Riders Union, Wauwatosa Chamber of Commerce, Historic Concordia Neighborhood or others.

5.4 Study Website

A stand-alone website will be developed for the study. It is anticipated that the existing RideMCTS.com site can add a “button” to direct their existing web audience to the study site. A stand-alone site will enable expedient reviews of website content by study team leaders and then quick uploads to facilitate the study schedule, and provide timely information to the public.

The website will offer convenient, 24-hour access to study information and feedback opportunities for stakeholders and the public. The site will be in a mobile-friendly format and will have a unique URL such as EastWestBRT.com.

Comments received via the study website and other outreach efforts will be compiled on a regular basis and shared among team members and project leadership throughout the study. A dedicated study email address will be utilized for emailed comments, and comments will be logged into a database.

Figure 5-1: East-West BRT Website



5.5 Third Party Outreach

The study will engage local stakeholders (third party groups) and their established communication networks to notify people about study meetings and distribute study information. The third party groups will help support Title VI goals and increase the study's credibility and transparency. To maximize outreach to minority, low-income, disabled and elderly groups, we will connect with local organizations and advocacy groups to disseminate study information and meeting notices. This will help generate interest in the study and keep the public and stakeholders informed about study activities.

We may provide communications in various formats to third party partners so they could transmit information to their already established e-newsletter, website, blog, and Facebook and Twitter networks. The use of third parties substantially expands the number of people reached and generates feedback on the study's website.

5.6 Social Media

Milwaukee County has a substantial social media presence with over 4000 people following on Twitter and Facebook. To efficiently utilize existing resources, the study team will provide content to Milwaukee County Transit System for its existing social media presence to broadcast information about the East-West BRT study. The study team can provide basic study information at key milestones for MCTS and others to post on social media to direct the public to the study website.

6. SCHEDULE

The public engagement efforts will be tailored to the overall study schedule. Preliminary agendas and expected outcomes of the public information meetings and stakeholder advisory group meetings will be prepared in collaboration with project leaders.

Figure 6-1: Proposed Schedule

Task Title	Task #	Month								
		FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	
Project Management and Internal Review	1	[Orange bar]								
Statement of Needs, Goals, and Principles	2		[Orange bar]							
Evaluation and Screening Framework for Potential BRT Alignments	3		[Orange bar]							
Data Collection and Review of Existing Conditions	4		[Orange bar]							
Alternative Refinement	5			[Orange bar]						
Technical Analysis	6				[Orange bar]					
Draft Technical Memo	6				[Orange bar]					
Final Technical Memo based on FTA review and comments	6					[Orange bar]				
Evaluation Framework Application	7					[Orange bar]				
Concept Design and Cost Estimate	8				[Orange bar]					
Public Engagement	9	[Orange bar with icons: pink square, yellow circle, black diamond, yellow circle, black diamond, yellow circle]								
Develop Final Report	10					[Orange bar]				
FTA Development Process	11		[Orange bar]							
Identify Locally Preferred Alternative	11				[Orange bar]					
Prepare Small Starts Application	11				[Orange bar]					
NEPA Class of Action Determination	11				[Orange bar]					
MCTS Submits Small Starts Application to FTA								[Green bar]		

■ Development of Engagement Plan
 ◆ Public Meeting
 ● Stakeholders Meetings

7. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT DOCUMENTATION

The study team will prepare a draft and final memo summarizing public engagement process and input received.