

Dear Mr. Abele, County Executive

A letter about transit service from bus riders

Members of the TSAC

Ladette Austin, County Board Administrative Assistant, transit rider

Patricia Lidicker, transit rider

Cheri McGrath, guide dog user, transit rider

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Others Commenting at TSAC meetings

County Supervisor Mark Borkowski, liaison to Transit Services Advisory Committee

Joyce Tang Boyland, transit rider, professor, Alverno College

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Mark McComb, assistant transit planner, MCTS

Tiffany Payne, transit rider, Independence First

Penny Sikora, legislative director, ATU 998

Martin Weddle, research analyst, Milwaukee County

Autumn Misko, resource specialist, Independence First

Kerry Thomas, director, Transit Now

And Many Others, whose comments follow.

August 2011

Dear Mr. Abele,

First of all welcome to County Government, and congratulations on your successful campaign to become our County Executive.

The Transit Services Advisory Committee is charged by the County Board to give advice about bus service to the County Board and to the Transportation and Public Works Committee. In writing to you directly today, we are not avoiding our responsibility to the County Board, but supplementing our work with a word of welcome, and some direct talk about bus service.

We, better perhaps than most citizens, understand the struggle for fiscal solvency for Milwaukee County Transit, and the complexity of making changes during a time of reduced funding. However, unlike many elected officials, we also actually ride the bus. If you haven't already, we invite you to ride the bus with us and see the system in action. Our participation on this Committee and our experience riding the bus, place us in the ideal position for sharing our thoughts on funding and improving the Milwaukee County Transit System.

We are extremely disappointed with the 10% reduction in transit aid in the State 2012-2013 budget, and concerned with the cuts this reduction will cause. In November 2008, the citizens of Milwaukee County passed a referendum to support an increase in sales tax in order to provide dedicated funding for transit. This dedicated funding is an essential component for rebuilding the Milwaukee County Transit System. We challenge you, as our representative, to find a way to make dedicated funding a reality.

At the same time, we believe that the debate must be broader than the simplistic "Fares Versus Service" discussion. Money from new riders is key. Transit should be portrayed as something delightful, safe, and personally satisfying. We need to break the old myths about transit, and break them now. With rising fuel prices, motorists will want to use the bus, but we need to find a way to help them through their misgivings, leave the car behind, take that first ("virgin") ride, learn the schedules, buy tickets or convince their employers to offer the Commuter Value Pass. Collaboration between government, transit, businesses and riders as well as strong marketing efforts across a wide variety of audiences is key to attracting new riders.

With that in mind, we have collected riders' advice since 2007. Most of the comments are from people who ride our buses. Some are from people who would like to use our buses, but are unable to make the system work for their needs. These comments span at least four years of observing our buses. During this time, the service has been cut and all of the problems we faced then are now worse. Today we present you with a summary of the ideas that were offered in these comments in the hope that it will support your promise to make our bus system work better. A copy of all of the individual comments is also attached. .

Much rides on the spirit of collaboration that has filled the air since your election. Now is the time. In keeping with our desire for improvement, we citizens submit these ideas for your consideration and pledge our assistance as you rebuild transit in Milwaukee County. To further this discussion, we would like to have you join us for our September 8th meeting. We would like to schedule this meeting at the County Courthouse at a time that is convenient for you. We petition you to listen to our ideas, and challenge you to find a way to work with other elected officials to make our bus system, again, one of the finest in the States.

Sincerely,

The Transit Services Advisory Committee (TSAC)

Comments from members of the TSAC, and recent correspondence
May, June, July 2011.
(emphases added)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Transit Users Advise MCTS & County how to Re-Build the System

CROSS-MARKETING

COLLABORATE with businesses - show them how they benefit.

Bus brings customers, workers; bus reduces need for parking spaces.

Ask businesses that benefit from bus riders for:

Free morning Newspapers, Water, Coffee.

BUNDLE the following promotions to build a mixed-class ridership

Tip workplace incentives to the bus instead of paid-for parking spaces downtown.

WiFi

Expand Commuter Value Pass to target niche businesses that benefit from riders: MMAC, Grocery, Bars and Restaurants, Sports Events, Festivals. Small Businesses, e.g. restaurants, design studios, artists - backbone of new economy.

Commuter Value Pass: sell this as a marketing tool, all over the County.

Install our new farebox kiosks in sponsoring businesses.

Recruit stores to accept Valid Transfers as point of sale coupons. (Pick&Save, PigglyWiggly, Kohls can provide a discount on purchases and a ticket for the bus ride home. Start this program between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. when stores are less busy.)

Milwaukee County is ready to work together. Tap this moment of empowerment.

COLLABORATE:

With County Parks and businesses: " Trip sponsored by..." e.g., Sunday to Parks.

Collaborate with the cities: Integrate transit into processes of municipal planning, zoning, and building codes.

Collaborate with Schools. The fiscal fight over riders is a scandal and hurts both. Both MPS and MCTS would benefit from collaboration. TSAC is discussing a DVD to encourage good behavior on buses and to put drivers in front of kids at schools.

Build the next generation of riders. Appleton allows students to ride free all week, just by showing a valid student ID. These passes could be earned by good behavior.

SCHEDULING

Install Real-Time arrivals at bus shelters; open Real-Time data to private developers so bus arrivals can be posted in retail shops - feasible by June 2012.

Riders complaint: the bus doesn't go where they need to be, and if it does, it is too slow to be a realistic option.

Decrease time between buses.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Transit Users Advise MCTS & County how to Re-Build the System

Develop incentives for using buses off-rush-hour during the work week.

Transfer corners should be user friendly, with schedules, maps.

FARES

Bus fares higher during peak time, and lower during non-peak time.

Seniors ride free from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Talk to **MMAC** to encourage their members to ride. Promote special bus-riding days to foster a sense of "party."

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Continue to encourage the New Freedom Program. Every paratransit eligible person who uses the regular route instead of paratransit saves the county over \$25 by riding the bus.

Improve the fixed route's usability for people with disabilities by providing further training to bus drivers on how to use the equipment and tie downs.

Rider statistics from MCTS should include paratransit.

Occasionally ask a Transit Manager to use paratransit in a wheelchair.

COMMUNICATION - SIGNAGE

Downtown Wisconsin Avenue desperately needs signs to direct people which way to walk to find a specific route stop. No fewer than 16 bus routes come into downtown, but to locate a bus stop requires guessing and walking as many as three blocks. Drivers often do not know where to walk for a specific route on Wisconsin Ave.

Signage is a problem west of 17th Street, too, where the #30 and #10 overlap and each uses different stops, sometimes two blocks apart.

COMMUNICATION - MARKETING

Transit needs a new marketing program that is hip to our times; its "quiet, elevator music" promotions are just too soft for the modern ear. Be assertive.

SELL TRANSIT VALUE

Environmental benefits

Land Use

Development: the bus makes the City's land more valuable, entices tenants.

Efficiency: transport our working population inexpensively.

Efficiency: take cars off our streets.

COMMUNICATE with Riders

A more aggressive Rider Insider Program, with incentives from supportive businesses.

TWITTER, gather young riders and Tweet. schedules, specials, detours.

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FACEBOOK

EMAIL

Invite riders to sign up - in any way.

Train drivers to be more assertive talking about Rider Insider.

Find riders with good communication skills and put them into videos to tell a story. Use in PSAs.

Communicate directly with passengers during budget talks: the fiscal crisis, decisions to cut, change or extend routes. Don't be so bashful about giving riders up to date information fliers. Use the bus; you have a captive audience.

COMMUNICATE with Businesses

Develop marketing strategies with the Creative Alliance of Milwaukee

Learn from vibrant Transit PR nationwide:

<http://im4transit.org/>

<http://www.mitchellairport.com/>

<http://www.golynx.com/>

Clean the interior of the buses daily. Is there a role here for youth looking for work?

Promote bus ridership among retail businesses - buses delivers customers. Talk to Mall owners.

COMMUNICATE with Motorists and with the voting Public

Billboards "Get out of that car"

PSAs "Winter? Let someone else park your car."

DRIVERS

Training should be customer-centered.

Politeness. "Good Morning" and "Thank You for riding the bus."

REWARD

We need a "hotline" for commendation of drivers, separate from complaint line.

PROMOTE hotline with compelling on-the-bus graphics, public awards.

RESPECT

Teach riders the challenges of driving a bus; encourage respect.

A Rider Insider goal "make your driver smile" today. "Is it so hard to say "Thanks"?"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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Statements from Riders and a Driver

What struck me was the number of riders who don't really have a voice in the debate. They simply don't have the time or means of taking part in these discussions. I think the County Supervisors should be holding ... budget hearings on these routes instead of obscure places around town. These are the people who will suffer the impact of this grandstanding.

--Steve and Chris Midthun (August 6, 2007)

I work for the Transit System and may not speak to the press. Many of us have been feeling very depressed as all the news is bad. We feel powerless to do anything about our fate. It seems that certain persons both elected and unelected who work for the media with talk shows that express nothing but hate are in charge in Milwaukee. The transit system's job is to transport people in the best manner possible in the most efficient way. Over the years we have been bled dry to balance the County's budget and now things are at the breaking point.

-- Employee, probably a driver, asking to comment anonymously. (August 10, 2007)

Chris Abele was recently elected to fill the remainder of Governor Scott Walker's term as Milwaukee County Executive. That gives Abele less than one year to accomplish anything as Milwaukee County Executive before he must seek re-election. Given the relatively short time for which Abele is assured to be in office, what can the newly-elected County Executive hope to achieve when it comes to transit?

Chris Abele held the position while he ran for office that he would not seek a sales tax increase for dedicated funding of mass transit, and it's unlikely that even if he supported a dedicated funding solution it could be installed given the short time Abele is assured of being in office and the Republican control of state government. Although we've endorsed a dedicated funding source as a logical step to ensure quality transit access for southeastern Wisconsin, we support the new County Executive's apparent desire to stick to issues that are controlled locally given the circumstances. With that in mind, the following are ideas that can encourage increased ridership on MCTS if implemented.

Real Time Open Data

The Milwaukee County Transit System, to its credit, has been excellent at providing open data of bus scheduling. This data is what is used to power Google Maps trip planner that can provide bus schedule data. MCTS officials have also indicated they're working on procuring and installing equipment to provide real time open data by the middle of 2012.

So what's the issue? The speed at which it's being delivered. The new County Executive has a chance to find some of those efficiencies he campaigned on and get the equipment installed and data exposed earlier than mid-2012. He also has a chance to engage the private sector before the system is even deployed to start building applications that take advantage of the new data.

Ultimately people will be more likely to ride a bus if they know when the next one is coming. Real time positioning data provides that. Alterra can have countdown timers in their coffee shops. Office buildings can display bus positions in their lobbies for tenants. Major bus stops can display countdown data. Text message based applications can be built that allow users to send a message to query the location of the next bus.

By accelerating the implementation of real time open data and engaging the tech community in Milwaukee, the private sector can more quickly create value for potential riders.

More on how and why open data is valuable with regards to transit in a previous article.

Simplified Mapping

Milwaukee is fortunate to have a number of hotels, businesses, and apartments within a block or two of the major bus corridor through downtown, Wisconsin Avenue. Frequent riders of the corridor know the routes and stop locations to quickly move anywhere between the Marquette campus and the lakefront, but the current downtown area map leaves a lot to be desired for

people less familiar with the system. New riders can be enticed to take advantage of MCTS simply by creating a first-time rider, downtown-centric map. The one-sheet map could be distributed at downtown hotels, offices, shops, apartment buildings, and the Frontier Airlines Center. The map should include the following features.

- Stop locations
- Route frequency indicated by width of route on map
- Major locations off map and the corresponding route to get there (Miller Park – 90, Milwaukee County Zoo – 10, etc, etc)
- Fare information (no change on board, \$2.25 cash, discounts for week, month, and 10-fare purchases)
- Schedule information (on back of sheet)

This idea was inspired by a similar map in Cincinnati by Nate Wessel (and funded creatively utilizing Kickstarter).

Improved Bus Stops

The average sheltered bus stop in Milwaukee is okay. When it's raining or snow, there is a decent chance those underneath won't get wet. When it's not freezing outside, the benches provide a fairly comfortable rest while one waits for the bus. All in all, the average bus stop is certainly better than standing on the sidewalk, but it still leaves a lot to be desired. Obviously physically improving the bus stops is going to cost money, so I would like to propose a quasi-privatization method by which better bus stops can be obtained. Wherever possible and desired, the bus stops should be turned over to area business improvement districts. Business improvement districts are well-suited for this because they already frequently invest in streetscaping and have a self-interest in approving the attractiveness and accessibility of their district.

The business improvements could make a number of improvements to their bus stops, including but not limited to.

- Posting paper schedules
- Utilizing open data to display an LED countdown timer for scheduled data (eventually migrating to real time data)
- Installing four-sided shelters to protect from the elements better
- Installing heaters that would operate on user-request for a few minutes at a time during the hours of operation of the bus route

--Jeramey Janenne

They need to **tweet** more effectively. They should partner with the festivals that are tweeting and have the festivals tweet about taking the bus to the festival. The bus should tweet about free days and upcoming events you can take the bus to. Right now it seems like they do this somewhat but they could do a much better job.

They should park a bus for tours at every **festival** in the city, like we do at the Bash.

They should have tickets available for sale online that you can print from your computer.

There should be a plexiglass encased bus schedule at every stop. This eliminates the need for paper schedules and thereby will pay for itself rapidly.

They should rent MCTS buses at discounted rates for MPS school trips instead of the school having to hire outside school buses. This exposes a whole new generation of young riders.

Instead of just having a free rides day, on their free rides day, all new riders should get a pack of 5 more tickets, so they get hooked.

They need to scrub those buses so all the dust in the window sills and the dirty handpulls are no longer gross.

They should go to businesses that already have the Commuter pass and ask for a table in their lunchrooms or a meeting with employees to talk about the bus, and have bus Champions at those businesses who can talk about how much they love it at those meetings.

--Amy, Professional Marketing Executive

Bill,

Marketing suggestions in part from a recent discussion with Christie Mole and Kristina Surfus:

1. Obviously, better service is the biggest of all.
2. **Cross market** with neighborhood and community events such as farmers markets, street and church festivals, art fairs, ...even major destinations like the museums, Pier Wisconsin, etc. (Would have to work the numbers) Event promotes transit by offering a discounted entry or food time or what ever if a transfer is shown. MCTS could then promote all of the events that would have a promotional give-away. There could be an informational booth at some of the events as well. Goal: visibility for both transit and community events, take the transit message local and make it about community building, get more people on the bus and bus riders going more places on the bus, reduce parking and traffic needs near events—which is always a challenge and a detriment to many. Once people try the bus for an event, they may get hooked. This could go as big or small as budgets allow. More investment would reap more return!
3. **Address safety concerns** head on and promote safe rides in a big way. Safety perceptions are a huge roadblock.
4. Promote a “**challenge week**” to ride the bus at the business level with prizes for people or businesses that get the most riders. Make it a fun competition with lots of recognition at the end for the businesses.
5. Work with **businesses to do promotions** in regular communications to workers or as pay check stuffers.
6. Offer **one day of free rides**—the few hours that is offered now is not enough and is not promoted widely enough. On those day, have events on the bus, legislative office hours, drum up excitement and invite everyone to breakfast or a party on the bus! Make it clear how much traffic was avoided, parking spaces opened up, pollution avoided, money saved by riders that can be spent in the community, etc.
7. **Promote cost savings** and reliable ride much bigger way—bill boards, etc. Gas prices are a huge hook right now. Get the billboards and employee promotions out now.

Would love to see all of your ideas when you have the list pulled together.

Thanks for you work on this!

Kerry

Bill,

I have a dumb question. Why does transit use **printed, paper schedules**? And how much do they spend on these? Wouldn't it be smarter to have the schedules posted as a sign on the appropriate bus stops?

I think transit is being somewhat wasteful with their money, and **not thoughtful enough about their marketing.**

I have been thinking a lot about our brief conversation last week, and I think **they [buses] should be easily profitable**, and the resulting revenue stream could create more jobs, more bus service, etc. They just need to think and act smarter.

Here are my thoughts:

#1 - **Clean the damn bus.** A small investment in hosing these things off every night inside and out would make a huge difference in attracting executives who hate their commute. There's no reason the seats and windows and that black cover on the entry should be dusty and dirty. And have you ever looked closely at the hand grips? Who wants to wear their fancy work clothes in something that is dirty?

#2 - Start **guerilla marketing.** Transit suffers from the same affliction our Parks do, IMHO. They don't know their target market, so they market to their current audience. Get out there and **educate the people who AREN'T currently using your services** and give them a reason to WANT to use your services! I believe there are only three reasons people don't ride the bus--

- a They think it's inconvenient (wrong)
- b They think it's a sign of low status (bad marketing on transit's part)
- c They are intimidated (bad marketing/education on transit's part).

Seriously--why is it the consumer's responsibility to educate themselves on transit right now? (And don't get me started on the park systems. I swear 90% of the population doesn't even know we have gems like Sheridan Park pool for stupidly cheap admission.)

#3 - **Incentivize riders. Instead of trying to make fares cheap as can be, make them worth the money.** Keep the discounts for elderly, children, disabled and students. They are going to use the bus regardless. They are not the target market! Consumers want **WiFi** on the bus, they want the **bus to be convenient, clean, and on time.** They want riding the bus to be easier and cheaper than driving and parking their car. They want to be able to drink their coffee, so they need to have a real garbage can and a recycling bin to throw their cup into, not a tiny gray foot tall bin that is covered in junk.

#4 - **Teach the bus drivers to smile.** I love some of the bus drivers on the #15. They smile, ask me how my day is going, coo at Keelyn. I look forward to seeing them. The grumpy, nasty, crabby bus drivers need to go.

#5 - **Ask people why they ride the bus. Then use those stories and those people to drive your marketing efforts.** Hone in on young executives who work downtown and then go after other people just like them using the information they provide on why they ride the bus. Messaging, messaging, messaging.

Focus on bus riding virgins, and the next generation bus riders. Focus your marketing on Thinking Outside the Bus! What a great promotional slogan. 😊

Thanks for reading my rant.

Amy

From Peter, former TSAC member:

Here is one from peanut gallery. Make Rt. 11 the designated route for **service to the airport**. I think it has a better chance to attract Riverwest, eastside, downtown, 3rd Ward, and Bay View riders to the airport and would think increase in travel times over Rt. 80.

Offer 1-day, 3-day passes. Others have thought about marketing: <http://im4transit.org/> We don't have to invent the wheel to improve MCTS.

I would like you to add to your list one big issue which is the transfers, especially for people with disabilities. This one deterrent affects everyone, though. If there was a better way to **design the system so there were fewer transfers**, that may help ridership. Obviously you could not do this for all rides but I am sure there is way to make look at the system and make adjustments looking at current use.

Autumn Misko, Lead Resource Specialist
IndependenceFirst

I know Bill's e-mail was on a positive note, but I wanted to share this link with you. It's the "comments" section from today's Journal Sentinel article about the expansion/remodeling at Southridge. There are a couple comments about how the bus brings in the "trash" to the mall! In other words, preserving the internal bus stop at Southridge, in the face of this kind of attitude, along with the addition of some outer ring restaurants, could prove to be a BIG challenge.

<http://www.jsonline.com/business/122480614.html?page=1>

Peggy

**Comments and suggestions
from MCTS riders and
from people who would like use our bus system.
These comments were solicited by the Chair of TSAC in March 2010.
(emphases added)**

Make it worth my while - it costs a LOT more in time and money for me, with kids, to get to school(s), groceries, activities, etc than to own/operate/maintain a car. It's also not particularly pleasant. Buses are dirty, uncomfortable, often crowded and inconvenient. For this privilege, I now pay \$2.25/ride (usually 1 way since transfers are only good for an hour) for adults and \$1/ride for my youngest, my older kids are \$2.25. It would sometimes be cheaper to take a taxi.

Having stop times listed on route signs would be extremely helpful. We don't usually even take the shuttles to festivals because it costs more for my family to take the shuttle (while dealing with all of the above-mentioned issues) than to pay for parking. I currently take the bus (sometimes) because I have a U-Pass but probably wouldn't without it.

My idea (I 'borrowed' this from someone, somewhere..) - make buses free or extremely inexpensive - .25? Add routes, buses, make them more pleasant - no, go beyond pleasant and make them ATTRACTIVE. The more people you have riding the bus, the fewer cars on the road (obviously), creating a cost savings in road repairs and law enforcement, fewer accidents, less pollution and congestion AND we reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Virginia

Bill;

Not only does Milwaukee need to preserve it's meager bus service, **we need to expand it radically and lower the fares.** In this economy with jobs as scarce as they are, potential employees need reliable and affordable transit not only to get to their jobs, but to get retraining, medical treatment and to interview for better jobs. What most people don't know is that not only is our transit bare bones it's also comparatively expensive to other cities our size.

Thank you for being a voice of reason and consistent warrior in this battle.

Jeff Jordan

Hi Bill

Since I work downtown, I take advantage of the bus system to avoid the high cost of parking. The "Commuter Value Pass" offered by my employer on a pre-tax, subsidized rate makes taking the bus a no-brainer for me even though I live about 5 blocks from the 15 and about 10 blocks from the express route 48.

So even though I am already a rider, I would say a big way to motivate people to take advantage of the buses more would be to **encourage more businesses to offer their employees the "Commuter Value Pass"** and to educate people on how to ride the bus and to read a route map - which is easy for us veteran riders but can be intimidating to newbies.

Hope all is well.

Best of luck,

Mike Kramer

Hi, Bill,

Clean. Safe. On Time (which does NOT mean once every hour!). Aside from these basics:

Partner with companies (particularly, but not limited to, those based downtown) & suburban shopping malls to help subsidize bus service...for **downtown companies**, the question would be, what do they currently pay for parking for their employees...and, if they can convince enough of their employees to ride the bus instead of driving their cars, shift that amount to the bus company...and **for malls**, for each bus rider disembarking at the mall, reimburse a portion of each fare to the bus company (drivers could keep a count...until the bus company installs computerized/video counting systems);

Train bus drivers to say "**Good Morning**", etc. as people arrive & something, perhaps, "**Thanks for riding with us**" as we leave;

Verbally **identify each next stop** by street name...either by the driver, or pre-recorded;

Weekly, **have someone from management ride buses for 6 - 8 hours...different lines, different times...**not only to experience first-hand their service, but they could also ask other riders what they think about the service & how to improve it;

Daily, **create some excitement about riding the bus...**choose several buses in which riders get a free ride for that day...and/or give each rider a "treat" of some sort...have riders enter their names for a drawing for a prize & the more you ride, the more often you can enter (prizes to be donated);

Have a contest once a month..."Spot the Celebrity" in which a local recognizable person would ride the bus & the first person to ask "Are you..." gets a pass for a (week/month) of free rides.

Speaking of contests, have a **contest for the best ideas** for running the bus service...open to all residents of, say, Milwaukee County (or, could be area-wide) in which the top 10 (5?) ideas are actually implemented...and the folks suggesting them are honored at a dinner...picked up by bus to and from their home...with top bus management;

Train management to drive a bus...ideally each manager (including top management) would, once every so often, actually drive a route (and if there is hesitancy, find out why...this may show, almost more than anything else, why people are not riding the bus).

Good luck, Bill--and, thanks!

: -) Ellen

Bill,

Thanks for asking this question. Here I am, a strong supporter of public trans and I don't ride the bus. These are the reasons:

1) With the schedules of my three children and my very busy husband, I barely make it anywhere on time, even with the luxury of my car. If I took the bus to these things, I'd not be able to do them. I have considered a life style change where things aren't so busy so I can take the bus when I need to, but that means I'd have to quit doing all the activism that I'm doing. I'm not sure how to resolve this.

2) My younger children are 1 and 4. It is not easy to go ANYWHERE, by any means of transportation. Many days, I just stay home. But if I venture somewhere with them that I need to drive far, the thought of spending an extra hour each way on a bus with them, while carrying a bunch of stuff, makes me want to break out in hives.

3) Final reason I don't use the bus, I live in Shorewood and I walk or bike pretty much everywhere I need to go on a daily basis.

These are not excuses....I want to be the person who uses the bus. So I'll keep working towards that.

These are things that I haven't done and could do to make the bus more accessible:

1) Investigate the routes to the few places I go regularly, that are out of biking/walking distance.

2) Look into the cost of using the bus compared to the cost of having my car and see if it would be a big enough difference that we might be able to work fewer hours to pay the bills.

3) Plan a day in the near future, when I am alone (without the wee ones), and can do some errands on the bus. Maybe this would embolden me to take them next time.

Blessings,

~g

Hi Bill,

I don't know how to solve them, but for me the major challenges are:

- I live in Milwaukee County (a convenient ONE block from a bus stop), but work in Waukesha County, 14 miles each way, but no way to get there via bus.

- Any trip that requires more than a single transfer takes a really long time. Time constraints on school drop-off, daycare pickup, and work hours make extended travel times impractical.

Unfortunately, this is probably just more problems than solutions. I'd love to be able to ride the bus, but for the above.

Dan

Get the bike lanes plowed all the way out so I can ride the bike and bus, since I don't have a direct route anymore. ??

Get a crew of **volunteer mentors for each line** who will show people who are scared of the bus how to do it. ??

Keep even just ONE person to man the bus info line. And make them more of an advocate --- I got someone once who told me that I shouldn't be riding the 60.

[Demonstrate] the bike rack ... and charter a city bus to do demonstrations at workplaces where ridership should be higher than it is. Try to collect data about where employees live relative to their workplaces and target if possible.

And lastly, my favorite idea:

Create a **Green Commuter Honor List**, publicize on targeted radio stations, have people print out a Google Transit page showing their commute to collect data about how people are riding, collect those and transfers as evidence of ridership, randomly select offices that meet a certain minimum per capita bus ridership per month or per pay period, and offer the employees an office party and offer the office positive publicity on the same radio station. This is to gather information, promote awareness, show non-riders that normal people ride, and provide a little push.

Of course this all requires money which is in short supply, but

Joyce

I wish I could take an **express bus to Waukesha.**

Peggy

March 4, 2010

Dear Bill -

First, your work on the Transit System in Milwaukee is what inspired me to think of suggesting you to the Shepherd Express as one of Milwaukee's Social Visionaries.

When our son was in grade school, we didn't have a car for five years. We walked, biked, took the bus. We live on the east side. Our son went to the Spanish Immersion School on 55th and 27th. I took the bus down there once a month to stay the day and learn some Spanish and see how things were going. It took me an hour and a half one way. I did small handmade art pieces on the bus. Twelve years ago my husband was at a University in Thunder Bay for the year. I walked and took the bus. Mostly we have only had one car. We now have two so that we have a shuttle for our canoe trips. I don't take the bus now but I do walk a lot and bike. We were in **Australia** for 6 months 10 years ago and took the bus and walked everywhere. Our roommate was 30 years old. Jan was a graduate student in the department where my husband was teaching - Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy. Jan was doing his graduate work on alternate forms of transportation in Europe. He was from Germany. We began to know more and more about **Europe and how much they have moved away from use of the auto.** It was very inspiring. **We have loved our life without the auto.** We were in Scotland for a month 4 years ago. We were able to get bus rides free (for those over 60). We found that we could bus and get rides with the mail car to remote places to back pack.

I am "Grandma Fran".

Bill, the only reason I still have a car is because there isn't a bus that stops in front of a grocery store that is convenient to get to (one bus away). I take it anywhere where I can get to my destination in one bus, however, or a well-running transfer (but not for heavy groceries).

Jill

Bill,

I have some experience with making the choice -- to ride or not to ride, the bus.

Once upon a time I was a post-doc in Pittsburgh, PA, and the closest place this country boy could find to live in was a 25 minute drive across the Allegheny River from the city. (25 minutes on a good day.) Post docs earn more than grad students, but much less than professors. My family of 3 owned one car, and wife was not about to be stuck on a quiet city/town suburban street all day.

I tried car pooling with a grad student who lived a few blocks away. This cut auto use in half, but restricted my mobility options during the day and imposed a degree of socializing that had its problems.

It turned out that my house was 2 blocks from where the direct route bus line went, so I tried that. It ran right by my office - 3 blocks away. I could get to my office in just about the same time as it took to drive when you add the time to negotiate the car's parking lot.

Monthly bus fare was small - much less than the cost of car parking, plus 10 cents per ride - cheap even then. Cost for my daughter to come with me to her day care: \$0. Plus, with my bus pass I could ride all over the city to errands and meetings, including weekends, for that same 10 cents per ride. Which I did; Pittsburgh's bus system in those days served me very well in the working portion of the city.

Now, why wouldn't other employees at the school -- staff, professors, etc., make similar use of the system? Every morning I rode the bus directly past one professor's home - I could almost look in his living room window - yet he insisted on driving and paying a considerable sum to park directly beside his office (our campus was very cramped for parking space). He always looked a bit nervous when the subject of getting to work came up, so I don't know why he chose to do this.

A common lunch time subject in the professors' lounge was what route to take to the campus. I was told a couple times, "I would ride the bus if the buses were good enough." Yet these same people didn't know how close the bus route ran to their homes, much less how close to the campus. And usually expressed no interest in learning. I concluded it was a cultural thing, and perhaps they felt a social distinction had to be maintained. At least one professor had begun adult life as a lab technician, so energy was spent making sure that his achieved station in life was clear to all. You never know who you will rub shoulders with, on a bus. That was not a problem for me -- I knew who I was -- and meeting socially "minor" people didn't reduce me.

This was in Pittsburgh, where at least during the first and second shift working hours the bus riders were much more egalitarian than I see in Racine today. (In the early morning hours a significant number of riders held conversations with the spirits surrounding them, looked furtively at other people, and generally made you wonder what they were up to.) The social status issue is alive and very well today. I see it every time someone says the buses are for poor

people who can't afford a car. I can almost feel the shivers of folks whose perceived middle class status is what defines their self-worth in the world. Too often, it is a tenuous hold that drives such fears. The abyss yawns.

Some people claim that buses make you walk all over the place to get to and from them. I recall telling my professor back home that I was amazed at how far and much city people walked. Of course, that was in comparison to my last months as a grad student, going from on-campus housing to my lab and back every day (about 1/2 mile, by bike or foot), and nothing else. I gained 40-50 lbs. in that 6 months. Had to buy a new suit, that fit, for my thesis defense. When I went to Pittsburgh and began moving around again, I took it all off. Maybe walking 10 blocks _per day_ is a good idea. (Reduce the cost of health care! Get healthier! Ride the bus!)

What would it take to get me out of a car and onto a bus? I no longer have a daily employment destination, so:

I would ride the bus downtown in Racine if service was at least every hour, and I could get to my destination downtown in less than twice the time it takes by car (about 20 min., including parking). And home again. Today this country boy lives outside the Racine City limits on the edge of the exurb, so bus service is problematic.

As for getting to Milwaukee and around in it, I would have the same issue - time. I usually go to Milwaukee to meet clients (parking supplied by them), or theater activities (we do 3 theatre companies plus occasional others in Milwaukee). The theatre is in the evening, and how well do the busses run from Milwaukee to Racine late at night? Like my professor friends of old, I no longer know the bus schedules, even roughly.

So to use buses, I would first have to decide I'm going to learn what's available. Weed through the complicated printed schedules to figure out what might work for me. Then play it out in the real a couple times, until I decide I can believe when the bus will arrive at my pick-up points.

It is a truism that when gasoline jumps to \$5/gallon, a lot of people will be willing to figure out the buses. When it does, will the bus system be able to catch up? Let's plan ahead for once, folks!

Cheer,

Jay

Dear Bill,

You are welcome to use any of my previous comments to you about Transit.

Here is a story you have not yet heard.

WHY WE NEED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY

Dan and I have traveled to Europe a number of times since 1997 (Dan much longer than that). All of our trips have taken us to three or more countries -- big cities and small, out of the way, rural villages. We ALWAYS use public transportation -- Eurail, bus, subway, boat, feet!

2007 stands as a marker that distinguishes public transit in Europe with public transit in Milwaukee, in Wisconsin, and in USA!

Our trip, during parts of June, July, and August, included Franciscan Pilgrimage, travel to a peace village, teaching at a university, travel to places where my father's ancestors had lived, and time for visits with friends, sight-seeing, and play.

Our plane landed in Spain and we took Eurail to Paris and on to Cologne, where we began the Pilgrimage, riding a tour bus to Belgium and back to Paris, and then on to Lyon. The two of us then took trains and buses to a number of small communities near Lyon, famous as resistance communities during WWII, before heading to Black Forest area of Germany, where my father's family came from. We spent a week there, riding buses and trains to all the places where we knew his ancestors had lived, worked, prayed, and played. From there, we headed back to Paris, by Eurail, and spent five days in Paris and surrounding areas, visiting art museums, cultural centers, and historic sites, all by bus, subway, or train.

We could travel ANYWHERE we wanted to go, and do so in comfort and on time, traveling coach class or Eurail class for seniors. Most significantly, EVERY BUS AND TRAIN in the Black Forest region of Germany was FREE! Costs were picked up by businesses that benefited from the travel and hospitality industries. (I am not certain as to whether these costs were also picked up for local folks!) Every where, every one rode trains, buses, or bikes, or walked! We were delighted with all forms of public transportation.

Then we returned home -- to two amazing headlines within one week.

1) Cuts in routes -- many routes, was one of the first headlines we saw when we returned; we wondered how folks who wanted, and more importantly needed, to travel to work, to visit family and friends, to worship, to play, to shop, could do so.

2) Within a week, the second headline screamed about raising bus fares. With little or no incomes, how will people be able to afford such an increase? Who will still ride the buses? How

will a community of people remain a community if they cannot connect with each other across the miles?

Talk radio hosts and guests seemed to support cuts in lines and service, and increases to costs. What were people thinking?

Dan and I kept thinking about how different it is in Europe, where people are not so "car-dependent" -- although sadly, this is changing in some places.

A good, efficient, and effective public transportation service is needed, both within communities such as Milwaukee county, and across communities, such as Southeastern Wisconsin, and well as across the state and across the country for a number of reasons.

- 1) Helps to protect our fragile ecosystem;
- 2) Helps people get places -- where they work, shop, visit with family and friends, worship, serve, and play.
- 3) Lower fares can generate an increase in riders, and thus generate an increase in revenue.
- 4) Routes that are developed to best serve people where they live, work, and study can generate increased ridership, and thus increase revenue.
- 5) The development of a large grid of the city and county with routes that cover every community in an efficient manner can help make certain that no person has to walk more than 4-6 blocks to find safe and efficient transportation.
- 6) Promoting more effectively the use of Transit Plus for elders and those with disabilities would help those who find such a distance an impediment to traveling for work or pleasure.
- 7) Using large, mostly empty buses, does not help the ecosystem or serve people in the best way. Use these during times when people travel to and from work and school, and use smaller, more energy efficient buses and mini-buses for other hours, and for routes with less volume.

For a wonderful book about the importance of buses to the life of a person and to the vibrancy of a community, I urge people to read "Riding the Bus with My Sister", a true story of the role buses played in the life of a young woman who found greater independence because her community had buses that connected her to others within the community and beyond, into neighboring communities.

Best wishes tomorrow (today!!) Thanks for all you do.

peace, Jackie

Response to Request for Comments August 6 and 13, 2007

On the occasion of the Bus Ride Protests from Bay View

<http://www.milwaukeerenaissance.com/BusesAreGreen/August6thRiders>

The cuts in Menomonee Falls will definitely effect where I work. We have a bus line that goes past our factory which some of our seasonal employees use to get to work. We are right now polling our workers to see the impact. Our next step will be to send a letter to elected officials stating our concerns about cutting these lines. The buses are some of the only means of transportation that some of them have to get to our plant.

Lori LaGrow

Lori's comments reference this news account:

<http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=655124>

Barrett fights to save bus route

Posted: Aug. 30, 2007

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett urged Waukesha County officials not to drop a bus route ...

Dear County Executive Scott Walker:

DO NOT CUT THE BUS!!!

It's a short sighted plan. It decreases MCTS ability to generate income, which in turn will only lead to further cuts in the future. You are starting a vicious cycle that penalizes the working poor, school children, the handicapped and the environment. Instead, increase ridership and services to make transit viable.

Advertise it is enviro-friendly. There are people who ride the bus strictly for environmental reasons. I am one of them. I own a car, but I choose to either ride my bike or ride the bus so that I do not use gasoline. Reach out to others like me.

Take steps to reduce the stigma that has grown around bussing in this town. It is not just the poor who can and should ride the bus, but that is what most people in Milwaukee think. Teach them otherwise. Raise parking fairs downtown. Make it economically undesirable to park a car. This will encourage people to take the bus and reduce traffic during the morning and afternoon commute. Use the money generated by the increased parking fees to offset the cost of transit.

Please. Fund Transit. Fix transit.

Here's an idea - USE transit. Take the bus once, you might actually see some of the people your choices will affect.

I'll be on the 10, 11 or 15. See you there.

Adam Traner
South Herman Street
Milwaukee, WI 53207

Dear neighbors

AND What will we do next?

August 27th, Russell and KK. Bay View rises to the occasion. So happy has our effort been, to protest bus route cuts, that our ride attracted a record number (17) on Monday, including two gentlemen from I-Level who are doing a video of public transportation in southeastern Wisconsin. They interviewed several of us. I was interviewed ON the bus! Something that has never happened to our fearful County Executive, Scott Walker, and he is the chief, the CEO, the brains behind the bus system.

We also drew into our ride two County Supervisors: Marina Dimitrijevic, that Bay View star of the County Board, totally visible to the voters, at events, accessible, friendly, and (shall we say?) always willing to go that extra mile (3 in this case).

County Supervisor Gerry Broderick and one of his east side voters, Mary Kelly, were on this ride. Gerry is so totally cut from different cloth. He is effective as a politician because there is a sense about him that he generates, it goes something like this: I'm an ordinary citizen and YOU could do my job too. (I'm not so sure) but it's clear he trusts the voters and is unafraid to take risks himself. A politician that is willing to risk the job is going to be more effective. Gerry actually is an artist and why he put up with being on the Board for some 8 years is amazing, but he loves to make difference.

Jill, a Bay View Matters person, whose full name I did not get. (Jill? Are you out there?) Hiroko Washizu from Tsukuba City, Japan, who visits Milwaukee yearly and uses the bus to get to campus for her research and to the zoo to meet her friends including a certain Snow Leopard. And, I've been told, visiting the great restaurants along the Route #15. She depends on the bus to make Milwaukee accessible to her.

Janine Arseneau, a small person who lives big and supports so many things so very well. It is a credit to Bay View to have her support. If she comes to breakfast Monday, ask her about Grandmas Without Borders, Core El Centro, Urban Ecology Center. This woman is tireless.

Catherine Turminaro, who recently was my alley neighbor and now is planning to leave our fair city for a cottage up north. Thanks, Cathy, for giving Milwaukee's bus yet another push out of the mud. Do you realize there is NO public transportation anywhere near that cottage?

Kay Augustine, Jennifer Jaworski, Adam Traner (who rides a fixie bike, how cool is that!), and others whose names will return to me. The city thanks you. The chatter around town is that cutting buses is just plain stupid. Thanks for helping bring the issue to the County Executive. And NOW please call him to tell him we are NOT done with this issue.

Scott Walker 278-4211 CountyExec@milwcnty.com

OUTPOST, LABOR DAY, 9 a.m., 2826 S. Kinnickinnic. Meet for breakfast, and talk - what should we do next? Other bus rides? The hearings? A petition? Naked protest anyone? Music on a bus? It's all on the table. Email brought us this far, but, folks, you have to meet these heroes in person. Let's sip coffee and munch Outpost bakery. (Breakfast runs from \$2 to \$6). Bring your ideas.

see you there, then

Bill and the Riders

Bay View Freedom Riders

There was a time when the people rejoiced,

Because they no longer were forced

To the back of the bus.

And then the time came

When they were no longer afforded

A ride on the bus, in the front, or the back.

And a new movement slowly emerged

(starting out in Bay View)

That brought back the bus for the people.

Viva, the Bay View Freedom Riders!

Godsil

hello bus butterflies!

thank you so much

for flying out to show

your support!

how lovely you all are.

And what splendid shades of green!

lets do it again!

yes, next time...I need help getting off the busmobile

it seems this driver fears

my getting away!

love & light,

-miss jennifaire ((*~))

(August 13)

What a wonderful gathering of neighbors.

After years of hearing about her, and her fabulous brand of close to the people politics, we met Supervisor Peggy West and her strong support of working Milwaukeans - her district lies generally north and along side Marina's. And her beautiful daughter. «Children have a different take on bus riding; Grandma used to give me a pass to take the neighborhood bus around and back to her house. (I think she wanted me out of the house.)»

Tony Zielinski, dressed to the nines ready to go to work for us. When I dropped in on a local merchant, merchant told me how Tony knows we need Routes 11 and 15 to support the kind of Bay View growth that is right for our neighborhood. This is the common wisdom of Bay View.

If you belong to an organization in Bay View, ask the leadership to support these bus rides.

In our company, a man who works for County Transit, supportive personally, and helping us understand how the process works. Another fellow I met at Transit Riders Union meeting who introduced himself as a Route 15 rider. On the bus he was coming up from the south burbs wearing green.

Godsil, ever present photographer, came by and promised us pics.

Jennifer, the only rider I've ever known who cannot convince the bus driver to stop by pulling the cord. Twice now. But don't be hard on the driver; he is truly delighted to see us do this. Jennifer is bravely facing this humiliation again, and has told me she would ride again. We have a volunteer to help the driver spot the stop. ;-)

Jenny, in from Duluth to help us.

Erica, with boyfriend, whose job allows him to sleep in (I have the same complaint about doing these rides)

Steve stayed on the bus after downtown to meet more riders.

Consistent bus rider (no car, no bike), playwright, wit, Mike Neville, telling us stories about New York subways and, yes, New York buses (they have buses too.)

The bus party is growing. 12 first run. 15 second. And since YOU will be aboard August 20 or 27, it will continue to grow.

Rave review for the neighbors of Bay View I fell in love with.

We can count on each other.

love to all

Bill Sell

Party on the bus. The Way to go!

Thanks for your concern. I work for the Transit System and may not speak to the press. Many of us have been feeling very depressed as all the news is bad. We feel powerless to do anything about our fate. It seems that certain persons both elected and unelected who work for the media with talk shows that express nothing but hate are in charge in Milwaukee. The transit system's job is to transport people in the best manner possible in the most efficient way. Over the years we have been bled dry to balance the County's budget and now things are at the breaking point.

But enough about us. The real victims are the elderly, the handicapped, the school students and those who are unable to drive for economic reasons (including some who will be cut off from their places of employment). While not in Bay View, the Rt. 20 is also slated for extinction which besides being a slap in the face to the Hispanic community, will cut off students from Ronald Reagan High School, one of the more successful high schools in MPS. With the abandonment of the Rt 64 (S. 60th St.), the complete south end of the Rt 67 (S.84 th and S. 92nd Sts.), the final abandonment of the already limited service of the Rt 35 to Southridge and the complete abandonment of the Rt 28 (S. 108th St-Hy 100-Mayfair Rd), the whole South Side will be extremely impacted by these cuts. And this is only the first round as 2009 and 2010 are slated for even more cuts. So again thank you for your concern and supportive action.

An MCTS employee

Your ticket to better transit. Use it!

steve, adam, bill, godsil, marina, tony.....

And all the other lovely *green bus butterflies* I met today!!

sO nice to meet you!

thanKS... for coming out...

hOpe to see you all again

any many more faces!

please join us

next monday...

lets meet at svens at 6:30 am for coffee!!

come one come all!!

Save The Bus Routes.....!!

hearts,

miss jennifaire (jaworsky)

write to Jenna

I had an early morning meeting so took the 15 from KK and Oklahoma to Sven's for my morning coffee and then walked home. It was a treat to see the dozen or so folks get on board.

I moved to Milwaukee 30 years ago and until last year I had never taken the city bus. I grew up in a town that had no transportation other than feet, cars and bikes. The bus didn't cross my radar. Last year I decided to take the energy crisis seriously (wake up Mary) and started taking the bus to work at Marquette and Jim took the high mileage car to work in Wauwatosa. If I missed the freeway flyer I could count on the 15 to get me home at the end of the day. I met new neighbors, was able to catch up on reading and do some knitting while chatting about the weather and local news. I'm glad I made the switch and hope that I will continue to have the option to do my small part.

I no longer work at Marquette but will continue to use the bus and leave the car in the garage.

mary griffith

Wow! My wife, Chris, and I tromped down to Sven's this morning and joined a baker's dozen of green-clad riders to help save the 15. Most jumped off downtown, but we rode up to Brady street for breakfast and talked to some great people along the way. We met neighbors, regular riders, and elected representatives.

What struck me was the number of riders who don't really have a voice in the debate. They simply don't have the time or means of taking part in these discussions. I think the County Supervisor should be holding his budget hearings on these routes instead of obscure places around town. These are the people who will suffer the impact of this grandstanding.

We will be riding again next Monday. See you then?

Steve and Chris Midthun

contact: Steve and Chris

It was good to get out and do something for a cause. I saw two people that I knew, and there were enough "green" supporters on board that I knew word of the protest had gotten around.

We handed out flyers and got the word out to a lot more people, too. I am looking forward to next week. In China, I actually saw buses wave people off because the bus was too full. Maybe that will happen to us!! I wonder how many buses we can fill with green protesters.

We ride the bus, dammit, and we will not go down quietly!

My heart was warmed by the large turnout of willing bus riders this morning. We hit a magic number with 12. And we handed out 100 fliers. And I saw on the faces of some riders both surprise and delight that “someone” was taken their bus service seriously. Our flier announced August 13 for a repeat.

Repeating makes it easier to build —

for all the wonderful new ideas we have offered each other here

Pick one

afternoon rides or anything else. YES, let’s add, build and enlarge.

Build:

repeat August 13.

Be ready to make a change, depending on what we learn.

Come on the ride and offer your ideas.

Offer your ideas here on BVM.

There are more ideas than folks just now; we need more folks.

One idea emerged without much thought.

And so - Adam, Arly, Erica and I handed out the remaining fliers to the next five #15 and #11 buses that stopped at Water and Wisconsin. These are working stiffs who just need to get through a miserable day at a miserable job. Some angry at the world. Some ignored us. And some took the flier happily. It’s possible now that a few hundred more know about the August 13 ride.

Egads, I made a mistake.

It could all go down the tubes if they actually used my face on TV tonight.

Tony was next to me, grinning, happy to be there.

I was happy to have him there.

It’s always better when you do things that everyone likes to do. Only a wretched few in this town actually want to get rid of transit; we are on the side of the angels on this one. Tony and Marina

are two elected officials who stepped into this argument in public. They did not have to, did they?

Help us bring the other Supervisors on that bus; make calls and invite them, Monday, August 13, specifically, Svens, 6:45, coffee, 7 a.m. bus ride. Bay View is serious. Call them all; ride them so they ride the bus with us.

The laughs this morning, the hugs make it all worth while. I'll do it again, just for the hugs. Someone else, please, answer that TV man's questions.

A reporter asked me if I thought this protest would be effective.

I laugh.

Efffffective?

If anyone could be "effective" just by a good plan, that person would be like the political genie in demand by everyone. And I assure you, I haven't the foggiest idea about being effective. I do stuff because my genes tell me to do stuff and to make my life worth living. I'm happier tonight because of what we all did; and am proud to be part of a gang of citizens that won't let the bus die.

rider outsider

Bill Sell

66 Rider-Recommended Steps To Increased Transit Revenue (drafted 2007)

<http://www.milwaukeerenaissance.com/BusesAreGreen/IncreasingTransitRevenue>

This statement dates back to 2007. Some of this advice has been incorporated into Transit - We notice!

NUMBER ONE.

Dear Supervisors, Mr. Abele, "RIDE YOUR BUS." You are the manager. Act like a manager. Your leadership will bring the Suits on the bus in the mornings.

TWO.

Fix the annual survey so you get useful information.

Talk to passengers. Talk to former passengers.

- The annual survey does not ask what can be done to make buses better. Why not?
- The annual survey does not interview former riders. Why not? Find out why they quit.
- The annual survey is done by phone. Why not ride the bus with a tape recorder and ask the riders. A qualitative data survey would be much more revealing.
- Require that every Transit employee ride the bus periodically. And bring comments to work.

THREE.

Federal Transportation money made Park East Developments possible

Park East Development tax revenue belongs to Transit.

- By resolution of Milwaukee County Board and Milwaukee Common Council. Do it now.

FOUR AND MORE:

Reward Your friends

- Forget the usual talk jock radio programs who hate (Hate!!) public transportation. Provide information to Public Radio (Milwaukee has FOUR - WHAD, WUWM, WMSE, WYMS) who are happy to provide their listeners with exclusive information.
- Single out stations that serve Transit, with a Transit Media of the Year Award.
- Promote Route-Free days on public radio. Reward listeners who are already friendly to public transportation.
- Offer specials: Free weekly pass to the first three callers...

Weekend Nights

- Twice as many buses on Friday, Saturday nights on bar-restaurant routes
- Friday, Saturday night bus transfers should be a hand stamp, good for the whole evening, the ride home.
- Promote Friday, Saturday night buses with “Master Lock” level TV commercials, to convince folks this is easier than driving and drinking.
- Friday and Saturday night buses will be Transit’s cash cows - to support the weaker routes, to build new ones.

More Passengers, Fewer Drivers.

- Ask riders what it would take to ride more often.
- Rail or street cars or articulated buses haul more passengers. One driver can pull several cars.

Pay for services that compete with buses.

- Advice to the CITY: Raise parking fairs downtown. Make it economically undesirable to park a car. This will encourage people to take the bus and reduce traffic during the morning and afternoon commute. Use the money generated by the increased parking fees to offset the cost of transit.

Bus teaches riders what Milwaukee thinks about buses

- Every bus has long areas of ad space, mostly unused. Use this space to highlight destinations on bus routes, in a way that encourages people to learn the system, and to know how buses serve us.
- Look at the interior design of a bus and make sure it appears friendly to the new riders; encourage new riders to return by use of the ad space above the windows.
- Encourage new riders to return by using bright interesting posters on the schedule box behind the driver.
- Sloppy appearance of schedules and “Bus Lines Newsletter” conveys the message that no one cares about this bus and that riders are losers.
- Bus schedules on the bus. Schedules for the route this bus is traveling. Especially easy gesture when the bus leaves a transit center.
- On voting days, route buses to polling places.

- Music, poetry, readings on evening buses when most riders are going out.
- WiFi instead of Transit TV. Commuters prefer to work than to be stuck in traffic or drugged with cheap commercials.
- Day Pass. Particularly useful to seniors who cannot go through the day without sitting and resting. Even one day a week, a “Seniors Day” - this will increase ridership.
- Mall information booths should have up to the minute bus information. Information people should know where the bus stops are and when they will arrive.
- Experiment - send bus through promising new routes on an experimental “free ride” basis.

Efficient use of total bus time. Moving buses faster along their routes

- Make bus driver more efficient by selling transfers from bus stop kiosks, accessible by coin or credit card.
- Transfer is read by scanner - technology is used around the world.
- (a) Faster boarding (b) Faster get-a-way from bus stop:

Wheel Chair cost saving

- Constantly improve, promote wheel chair access.
- Bus shelters need pictures showing a wheelchair getting on and off a bus.
- Each time a disabled person chooses the bus over Para Transit, he or she is saving Transit about \$20.

Reassuring passengers who are waiting:

- Each bus stop will have bus-GPS driven digital clock telling rider when the next bus will arrive.
- Each bus stop will have schedule posted. And Transit System map.

Reward Revenue Sources

- Take the \$2 million revenue gained from the unfortunate 2007 bus cuts and use it to strengthen or expand other routes.
- Accurate count of passengers and bicycles gives information to build the system

- Give bonuses to drivers whose passenger load goes up. Passengers actually make a point of catching the bus with the friendly driver. (Friendly sells.)
- Give awards to consistent bus riders.
 - Coffee Coupons?
 - Annual awards dinners \$15 per plate includes bus pass for the following week.
 - Awards during Downtown Night Out when restaurants are competing
- Persuade coffee vendors to participate
- Earmark revenue from revenue positive routes to pay for marketing of the weaker routes. If all revenue is thrown into the same pot, there is no strategy for success.
- Promote weaker routes with focused marketing. All routes feed all routes.
 - Give occasional free rides on selected routes so newbies will try the bus.
 - Take Route #11 (and others) to a food store, perhaps a detour to the Holt Street Pick & Save.
 - Route #11 could also detour into Target on Chase.
 - Route #11 should go to the airport, serving EastTown and its attractions.
 - Drop passengers with shopping carts at the door, and cross-market the service with the store:
 - Stores so served can be persuaded to reward customers with a bus ticket.

Convince car drivers to take the bus by promoting the bus as “Hip”

- Market Bus To Work in the same way that Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin promoted successful Bike To Work Week - going to work places to recruit a proactive coordinator and get the support of management.
- Get advice from the Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin on marketing buses to bicyclists.

Use your assets. Marry buses to parks and entertainment

- Marketing our Parks: packaged outings for families to get on a bus and visit our amazing parks.

- Marketing with Theaters: specify the Route # bus you need to get to a specific movie or drama or dance or opera or symphony or basketball game. Market this with OnMilwaukee.COM
- Marketing with Zoological Society: special express buses taking people directly to the zoo.
- Express buses - not waiting for Walker's or Barrett's express bus plan, but just promote, run and promote some #30, #15, #14, #10 buses with fewer stops.
- Route 11 - route it through the Pick n Save, Home Depot complex on Chase; and maybe Target (north of Oklahoma)
- Bike racks on buses that go to County Parks.
- Bike racks on all buses. Sooner the better.
- Finally, Watch Your Governmental Language. When you talk buses you are either building or tearing down our bus system.
- No one goes to surgery based on years-long discussions of cutting, bone sawing, stitching skin, bleeding and hospital death rates. SO THEREFORE
- Stop talking taxes first.
- Talk GOALS. Government should lead, not follow.
 - Tax is not the issue; economic development, job service, and drawing industry back to the city is the issue. The financial solution will emerge when the discussion focuses on the value of what we are trying to do. A good leader will establish a vision.

A word of advice first: Our political discussion in Milwaukee County government is depressing, moribund, with hours of "dead in the water" yammering about details. Ignore the trash talking from people who don't care about the bus.

We need positive talk and big cheers for the Milwaukee that drives the economy of the state. We need a fresh "business-like" approach to our problems. Research, fact finding, no more slogans.

Riders want and need a system we can brag about and want to board.

All steps point to one Goal: get every citizen to ride the bus Once.

<http://www.milwaukeerenaissance.com/BusesAreGreen/IncreasingTransitRevenue>