

# ATPA “Telling Our Story”

## #SAVETHEBUS Campaign



# MCTS's Fiscal Cliff - Background



- Starting in 2025, MCTS would run out of federal stimulus (ARPA) funding
- MCTS required an unprecedented \$31.4 million in tax levy
- Without funding, MCTS would have to cut nearly half of all routes along with large segments of other routes (16 of 36 routes):
  - Routes 11, 20, 22, 28, 31, 33, 34, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 68, 88, & 92
  - Segments of Route 19, 60, 76, and the PurpleLine

Think Big!

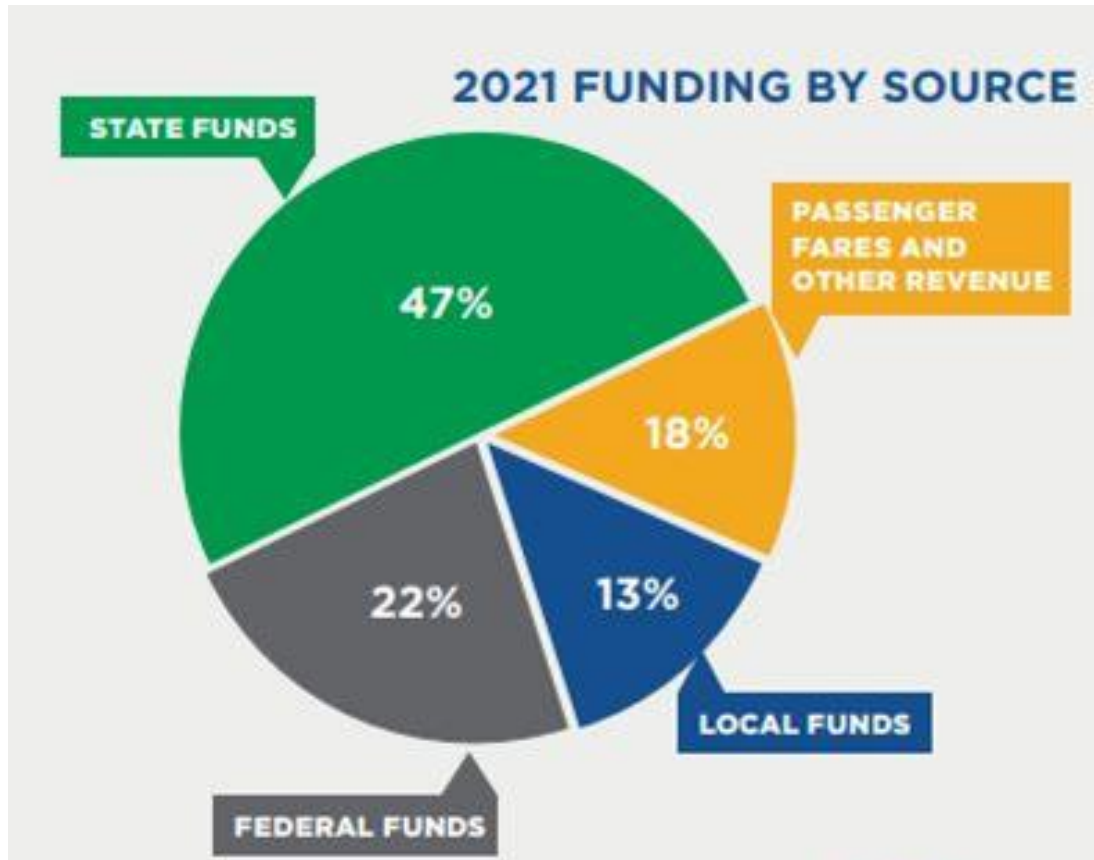


# 2025 Fiscal Cliff – Talking Points

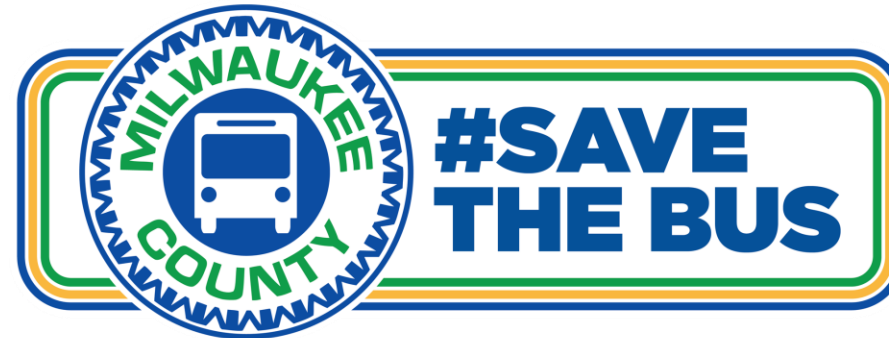


- Stop cutting transit or it won't be useful. We've endured a decade of cuts.
- Failing to invest in transit will **set back the local economy** by **exacerbating labor shortages** and **reducing educational and health outcomes** in our community.
  - 2,300 fewer businesses would no longer be near a bus route
  - 70,000 fewer jobs would no longer be near a bus route
- **125,000 people** would no longer live near a bus route:
  - 60,000 persons of color
  - 30,000 people with disabilities
  - 15,000 senior citizens
- Unlike other major cities in the U.S., MCTS is NOT supported by a dedicated source of funding like a sales tax.

# Our Funding “Story”



- How do you explain a complex topic?
  - Use pictures, infographics, videos, and testimonials
  - Emotional appeal



# 2025 Fiscal Cliff – Visual Storytelling



# #SAVE THE BUS Campaign Website

[RideMCTS.com/SaveTheBus](https://RideMCTS.com/SaveTheBus)



- Media Hits: 235
- Unique Website Visits: 16+ million
- Audience Reach: 37.7 million

**You can help us #SaveTheBus!  
Check out the 5 things you can do  
TODAY to help support MCTS.**

1. Download the #SaveTheBus badge and any of the infographics and share it on your social channels along with the hashtag to start spreading the word.
2. Tell your County Supervisor why the

## **Milwaukee County's bus system is facing major cuts and needs your help.**

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is facing a \$26.5 million budget shortfall in 2025 due to long standing structural budget problems and the impending expiration of temporary federal COVID19 relief funding. In addition, Milwaukee County itself is confronting an across-the-board budget crisis.

To put this shortfall in context, a \$26.5 million cut would result in a **20 percent cut in service which could represent nearly one half of all routes in the system** spread across Milwaukee County. These service reductions would aggravate the economic damage caused by COVID19, keeping literally millions\* of riders from getting to their job, school, hospital or church, and harming local (and state) businesses in the

# #SAVE THE BUS - Rider Videos (5)



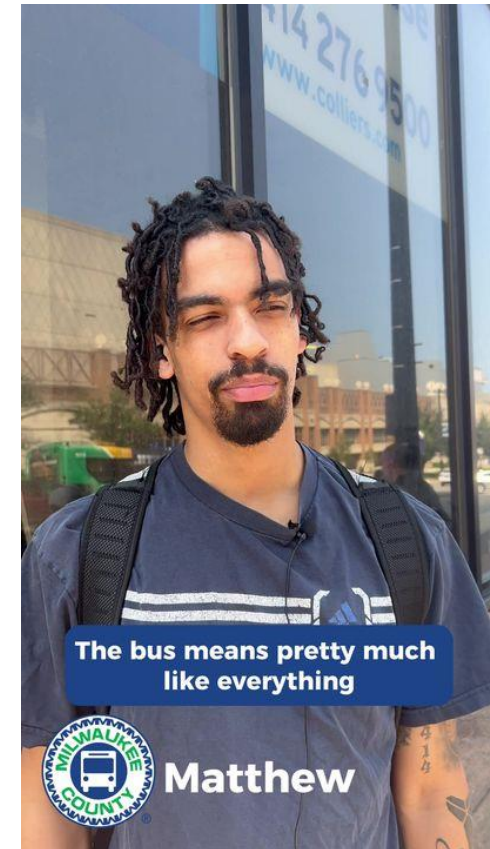
Total Engagements 6,433

Impressions 248,852

Video Views 29,829

Reactions 556

Shares 152





# #SAVE THE BUS Campaign – Paid Media



## MCTS BUS SERVICE IS AT RISK OF FACING MAJOR CUTS

### To Everyone Living and Working in Milwaukee County:

Great cities rely on great public transit. If you live or work in one of the 19 municipalities that make up Milwaukee County, I hope you'll help us save transit.

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is facing a crisis whose ripple effects would touch the entire community. MCTS is confronting a projected \$26.5 million budget shortfall in 2025 after relief funds provided during the COVID-19 pandemic run out. Despite our ongoing efforts to control costs (which have us ranked second among our peer systems in cost-per-vehicle and third in cost-per-passenger) we are hurtling toward a fiscal cliff.

**Without a sustainable funding solution, MCTS bus service will shrink by more than 20 percent which represents nearly one half of all routes in the system.**

Failing to invest in transit will have cascading, cross-sectoral ramifications for all of us—setback the regional economy, exacerbating labor shortages, and impacting education and health outcomes. And the harm done by such drastic reductions would fall on those least able to absorb additional burdens.

Most large cities invest in their transit systems with sustainable funding, like a local sales tax, that is indexed to grow year over year. MCTS receives local funding through a combination of property taxes and a vehicle registration fee—both of which don't match the scale of the gap we face. Without a reliable source of local funding, the proposed transit funding cuts would cripple Milwaukee County. We need allies like you to help position MCTS for growth.

### Here's how you can help:

- Let the state legislature know that you support Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley and the Move Forward MKE coalition to create sustainable local funding for local priorities through at least a 1 percent local sales tax. (Sample e-mails and a directory of legislators can be found at [ridemcts.com/savethebus/](http://ridemcts.com/savethebus/))
- Put an MCTS "#SaveTheBus" logo on your website and social media pages. (Download at [ridemcts.com/savethebus/](http://ridemcts.com/savethebus/))
- Register your company for the MCTS Commuter Value Pass (CVP) program. Enrolling your employees not only provides a business tax deduction, it also frees up parking spaces, supports sustainability and equity goals, and more. Get the details at [cypass@mcts.org](http://cypass@mcts.org).

**The bottom line:** MCTS helps support and grow our economy by getting employees to their jobs and customers to local businesses. Every strong community in the U.S. has and needs a strong transit system.

**We hope you'll join MCTS, support our great city and county, and help #SaveTheBus!**

  
Denise Wandke  
President and Interim Managing Director  
Milwaukee County Transit System

  
Donna Brown-Martin  
Director of Transportation  
Milwaukee County



#SAVE THE BUS

## YOU CAN HELP SAVE THE BUS.

Find Out How



MCTS BUS SERVICE IS AT RISK OF FACING MAJOR CUTS

SEE WHAT'S AT STAKE



# #SAVE THE BUS Campaign – Consumer Outreach



MCTS FACES A  
PROJECTED  
**\$26.5 MILLION**  
**BUDGET SHORTFALL**  
IN 2025.

SOURCE:  
Wisconsin Policy Forum



NEARLY **HALF OF ALL**  
**ROUTES** IN THE SYSTEM  
MAY BE AFFECTED.

SOURCE:  
Milwaukee County Transit System



CUTS TO TRANSIT  
**NEGATIVELY IMPACT**  
THOSE WHO CAN  
LEAST AFFORD IT.

SOURCE:  
Milwaukee County Transit System



**2,366 BUSINESSES**  
COULD LOSE ACCESS  
TO BUS SERVICE.

SOURCE:  
Milwaukee County Transit System



# #SAVE THE BUS Campaign – Stakeholder Outreach



MILWAUKEE COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM

## #SAVETHEBUS FROM MAJOR CUTS

**Milwaukee County's bus system is facing major cuts and needs your help.**

The Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) is facing a \$26.5 million budget shortfall in 2025 due to long-standing structural budget problems and the impending expiration of temporary federal COVID-19 relief funding. In addition, Milwaukee County itself is confronting an across-the-board budget crisis. Furthermore, state support for mass transit is down four percent in real dollars since 2011.

If MCTS were to suffer a cut in state mass transit aids similar to that of the 2021-2023 state budget, it would result in a **20 percent cut in service, which could represent nearly one half of all routes in the system spread across Milwaukee County.** These service reductions would aggravate the economic damage caused by COVID-19, keeping literally millions\* of riders from getting to their job, school, hospital or church, and harming local (and state) businesses in the process. These cuts would also derail the progress MCTS will make with the start of the CONNECT Bus Rapid Transit line this year as well as the recent MCTS NEXT system redesign.

**For more information, contact:**

**Denise Wandke**

President and Interim Managing Director  
Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS)  
414-937-3244 | [dwandke@mcts.org](mailto:dwandke@mcts.org)



[RideMCTS.com/SaveTheBus](https://RideMCTS.com/SaveTheBus)

**MCTS FACES A PROJECTED \$26.5 MILLION BUDGET SHORTFALL IN 2025.**

**87% OF TRIPS ON PUBLIC TRANSIT DIRECTLY BENEFIT THE LOCAL ECONOMY.**

**HALF OF BUS TRIPS ARE TO AND FROM WORK.**

- Within 6 months, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors **PASSED** the .4% sales tax!
- Our fiscal cliff has been **DELAYED** for two years.
- We are advocating for **SUSTAINABLE** funding so our story-telling efforts will continue!

\*With a fleet of over 320 clean-diesel buses and a dedicated team of 1,000 drivers, mechanics and administrative staff, MCTS provides nearly 16 million rides each year and generates a massive economic impact for the region.



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# YES!



**Thank You!**  
**RideMCTS.com/SaveTheBus**  
**khoffman@mcts.org**

