

Lessons Learned Implementing a Route Redesign Project

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Milwaukee County Transit System's Route Redesign Project: MCTS NEXT



- Expanded High Frequency route network to 6 new corridors (16 total)
 - 165,000 more people have access to High Frequency service (50% gain)
 - 43,000 more jobs are along the new High Frequency network (23% gain)
- Expanded service to unserved or underserved job centers
- Simplified the route network to make it easier to understand
- Advanced Racial Equity by increasing access for people of color to essential destinations
 - 90,000 more people of color have access to High Frequency service (50% gain)
- Balanced bus stops to widen spacing, reduce travel times and improve On-Time Performance

**MCTS
NEXT**

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Lesson #1

Consider rolling out the redesigned system in a phased implementation



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Why Did MCTS Implement Redesign in 3 Phases?



The new service changes in MCTS NEXT that originate in Planning created much more work than usual for other departments!

- 1) **PLANNING** (3 Planners): Recommending new run times for 33 routes x 3 schedules = 99 new sets of run times + 33 revised Bus Stop Lists
- 2) **SCHEDULING** (4 Schedulers): Re-writing schedules for 33 routes x 3 schedules = 99 new schedules
- 3) **PLANNING / TRANSPORTATION / PARATRANSIT / MARKETING / BUILDING & GROUNDS:**
Bus stop changes (250+ new approvals, 2,500+ temporary signs, 2,500 blade changes)
- 4) **TRAINING:** Train 700+ bus operators on 33 route changes, create and update brand new bus operator route training website
- 5) **CUSTOMER SERVICE:** More staffing hours needed, training for agents

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Lesson #2

Get your new and relocated bus stops approved 6-12 months before implementation



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The Bus Stop Approval Process



INTERNAL

1. Does the location meet the criteria Planning uses?
 - Transfer corner? Spacing? Ridership? Serves Elderly? Serves Persons of All Abilities?
2. Does the location meet Transportation/Training requirements for safety and ease of operations?
3. Does this location meet ADA requirements and, if not, what's the plan to bring it to compliance?
4. What is your staffing plan to get a significantly large number of new stops approved? **Temporary stops!**

EXTERNAL

1. Did the stop get approval from the municipality? (Subcommittee → Public Works → Governing Body)
 - Meetings with multiple staff or committee members may be needed to talk through locations
 - Site visits may be needed
 - Planning staff may need to be present to answer questions at Governing Body meetings when seeking approval
2. Was there any outreach to local businesses, residents about new stop placement?
 - If a municipality has never had bus stops on a certain street, they WILL have questions about the implications of new transit there (traffic flow, safety, ADA compliance, snow removal, shelters, etc.)

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Lesson #3

Post helpful information at every bus stop
undergoing a change...TEAM effort needed!



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Temporary Signs – How Most Riders Get Updated



How detailed do you want to get? More specific information means more unique signs to print, assign and hang.

Group stops in types of changes that can use general messaging, if possible.

Planners were asked to assist Route Supervisors with hanging temporary signs.

ALL HANDS ON DECK!



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Lesson #4

You may need to change some bus stop blades BEFORE the route change occurs



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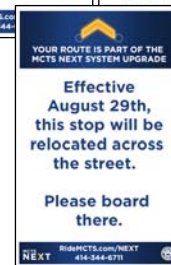
Changing Bus Stop Blades



Our Building & Grounds team has one leader and 3-4 guys who typically change 25-50 bus stop blades on the weekend before a new pick.

Phase 3 saw over 1,200 blades require changing!

Eight weeks before the change date, a plan was devised on how to get this done. Use those same temporary signs for stops!



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Lesson #5

On Day One, put Planners on the street



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Let Your Planners Get Out on the Streets!



Our Marketing Department asked if Planners would make themselves available to ride the routes that changed in Phase 3 on the first weekday (August 30th) after the changes. We agreed. What did we do?

- 1) Assigned each of us 3-4 routes to ride close to where we live
- 2) Handed out new printed schedules and system maps
- 3) Answered questions, fielded both positive comments and complaints
- 4) Listened to bus operator feedback
- 5) Gained immediate feedback on small changes that positively impacted riders and operators
- 6) Met up in-person for lunch!

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MCTS Planning

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Questions?

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