

# Madison North-South Bus Rapid Transit Project

## Madison, Wisconsin

### Small Starts Project Development (Rating Assigned November 2023)

Summary Description	
<b>Proposed Project:</b>	Bus Rapid Transit 11.5 Miles, 24 Stations
<b>Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):</b>	\$150.70 Million <small>(Includes \$3.8 million in finance charges)</small>
<b>Section 5309 CIG Share (\$YOE):</b>	\$118.13 Million (78.4%)
<b>Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2027):</b>	\$10.20 Million
<b>Current Year Ridership Forecast (2023):</b>	3,000 Daily Linked Trips 872,800 Annual Linked Trips
<b>Horizon Year Ridership Forecast (2045):</b>	5,700 Daily Linked Trips 1,654,300 Annual Linked Trips
<b>Overall Project Rating:</b>	Medium
<b>Project Justification Rating:</b>	Medium
<b>Local Financial Commitment Rating:</b>	Medium

**Project Description:** The City of Madison proposes to implement a bus rapid transit (BRT) project running north-south from neighborhoods north of Madison, through downtown and south Madison, and into the City of Fitchburg. The project includes 5.2 miles of new exclusive bus lanes and is planned to share a 3.5-mile segment of the Madison East-West BRT Project that serves nine existing stations. The project includes distinctly branded shelters with real-time arrival information. Service is planned to operate between 5:00 AM and midnight on weekdays with buses running every 15 minutes between 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM. On weekends, service is planned to operate between 6:00 AM and 11:00 PM with buses running every 15 to 30 minutes.

**Project Purpose:** The Madison North-South Bus Rapid Transit Project is planned to accommodate the anticipated increased travel demand along the north-south corridor from Northport Drive and Packers Avenue, in the north end of the city, to the City of Fitchburg. The City of Madison forecasts a population increase of approximately 32 percent and an employment increase of 13 percent along the north-south corridor by 2045. The proposed BRT project is intended to provide service for underserved communities and low-income populations to employment and healthcare facilities including downtown Madison, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, UnityPoint Health Meriter Hospital, SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital, and planned transit-oriented developments near the former Oscar Mayer meat processing plant.

**Project Development History, Status and Next Steps:** The project entered Small Starts Project Development in July 2023. The City of Madison anticipates the selection of the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the project in early 2024 and to have it adopted into the region’s fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan in mid-2024. The City of Madison expects to complete the environmental review process with receipt of a Categorical Exclusion from FTA by mid-2025. The City of Madison anticipates receipt of a Small Starts Grant Agreement in mid-2025, and the start of revenue service in late 2027.

## Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
<b>Federal:</b>		
Section 5309 CIG	\$118.13	78.4%
FTA Areas of Persistent Poverty Program	\$0.93	0.6%
<b>State:</b>		
Wisconsin Department of Transportation	\$10.00	6.6%
<b>Local:</b>		
City of Madison General Obligation Bonds repaid by City of Madison Property Tax Fund	\$15.14	10.1%
City of Madison Tax Incremental Financing District 51	\$5.00	3.3%
City of Fitchburg	\$1.50	1.0%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$150.70</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**NOTE:** The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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**LAND USE RATING: Medium**

The land use rating reflects population density within one-half mile of proposed stations, employment served by the line, and the share of legally binding affordability restricted (LBAR) housing in the station areas compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- Average population density within one-half mile of all station areas is 4,000 persons per square mile, corresponding to a Medium-Low rating. An estimated 86,800 jobs would be served by a one-seat ride on the project, corresponding to a Medium rating. Average daily parking fees in the central business district range from \$9 to \$16, corresponding to Medium to High ratings. The ratio of station area to county LBAR housing is 3.80, corresponding to a High rating.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-High**

**Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-High**

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* Comprehensive plans encourage greater density through mixed-use development and redevelopment on existing city infrastructure and in transit-friendly corridors. Madison's *Complete Streets Policy* (2009) and *Complete Green Streets Guide* (2023) establish design standards encouraging different transportation options. Other neighborhood and small area plans provide tailored recommendations for development, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements, pedestrian-friendly design, and amenities in station areas.
- *Supportive Zoning Near Transit Stations:* The City of Madison's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Overlay District covers properties within one-quarter mile of the city's BRT corridors. The TOD Overlay increases permitted density (up to a High rating), allows accessory dwelling units, increases building heights, and expands the variety of building forms in residential, mixed-use, commercial, and employment zones. It also regulates parking access, auto-centric activities, and building orientation to create pedestrian-friendly spaces. Fitchburg has a SmartCode District designation encouraging transit-friendly, form-based design (up to a Medium rating), but current station areas are not zoned as such.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* There is evidence of public outreach for city-wide initiatives, e.g., *Madison Transit Corridor Study* (2013) and the recent *Transit Network Redesign* (2022), as well as neighborhood and small area initiatives. Tax increment financing is actively being used to support transit and mixed-used development in both cities. The City of Madison is proactively rezoning parcels based on plans to increase density in station areas. Opportunity Zones are present in the corridor.

**Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-High**

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Transit-supportive development in the form of townhomes, mid-rise apartments, mixed-use developments, and adaptive reuse of vacant buildings with reduced or hidden parking facilities is occurring along the project corridor, including the shared central segment. An estimated 85 development projects intended to deliver 5,800 dwelling units and 1.18 million square feet of commercial space are currently under review.
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* There are several large underdeveloped commercial and industrial sites, e.g., the former Oscar Mayer property, and planned redevelopment of the Triangle Sites. Residential growth has outpaced forecasts and demand for housing is strong. About 54 percent of residential construction since 2006 is redevelopment/infill development, and of that development, 72 percent is within one-half mile of planned transit station.

**Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium**

- There is an affordable rental unit shortage of roughly 11,700 units measured by the number of households earning less than 30 percent of area median income (AMI) that are housing cost burdened. Plans call for affordable housing at all price points and seek to locate them near transit. Financial incentives include the City of Madison's Affordable Housing Fund, Land Banking Fund, and affordable housing bonus. No information is available for the City of Fitchburg.

# North-South Bus Rapid Transit Madison, WI



North-South BRT Line (Route B)

New Station  
 Shared Station

East-West BRT Line (Route A)

City of Madison

Parking

Surrounding Communities

Bus O&M Facility

