

## ADVOCATES SET LISTENING SESSION - *Seek Public Input on Milwaukee Transit Crisis*

### **For Immediate Release**

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Transit advocates from around the Milwaukee region are asking residents to participate in a [Community Listening Session on the Public Transit Crisis](#) on Monday, [December 3, from 5:30 – 7:30 pm](#), at [Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St.](#) The public meeting is designed to air the stories and concerns of the many Milwaukee residents and employers who are depending on transit.

Advocates urge community members who depend on transit or believe that Milwaukee needs more or better transit, to share their stories in the public meeting.

“One of our community’s biggest concerns is the extreme and unacceptable rate of joblessness in the central city, for persons of color in general and African-American men in particular,” stated Rev. Willie Brisco, President of Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAHA). “We need to make sure that the transit system can help people in our community get to jobs.”

“Many employers in outlying areas also want transit to get them workers,” noted Jim Stewart, CEO of Volunteers of America of Wisconsin.

“Public transportation is also a critical health issue,” stated Dr. Patricia McManus, President and CEO of the Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin. “We can’t have healthy people in a sick community. And we also need transit to improve our air quality.”

Autumn Misko from *IndependenceFirst* pointed out “Expected shortfalls for the Milwaukee County Transit Budget for 2014 will significantly impact people with disabilities as these will likely result in reduced services and fare increases for both fixed route and paratransit services. Many people with disabilities rely on these services exclusively for their transportation needs.”

“First Transit, one of the private contractees providing paratransit services for the Milwaukee County Transit System, has subcontracted its responsibilities to vendors without oversight or quality control, resulting in more complaints,” added Alan Freed, Jr., Disability Rights Wisconsin Supervising Attorney.

“Transit access is a civil rights issue,” noted Jackie Ivy, of the Milwaukee Transit Riders Union. “We urge the community to come talk about its concerns.”

*The program is sponsored by ACLU of Wisconsin, African-American Civic Engagement Roundtable, ATU Local 998, Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, Disability Rights Wisconsin, IndependenceFirst, MICAHA, Midwest Environmental Advocates, Milwaukee Transit Riders Union, 9to5, Wisconsin Interfaith Power and Light, and Volunteers of America of Wisconsin.*