JOE DAVIS, SR.
Alderman, 2nd District

CHAIR
• Community and Economic Development Committee
• Sister Cities Committee

VICE CHAIR
• National League of Cities' International Council

CO-CHAIR
• Black Male Achievement Advisory Council (BMAAC)

MEMBER
• Public Safety Committee
• Public Works Committee
• Steering and Rules Committee
• Deferred Compensation Board
• Milwaukee Economic Development Corporation
• National League of Cities' Board of Directors
• National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials Board of Directors

HONORARY CONSUL
• Republic of South Africa – State of Wisconsin

Luxury versus necessities

Statement from Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.
December 9, 2014

As the Common Council debates the new revised funding of the Mayor's Streetcar Project, I continue to object to the project based on the area of greatest needs here in the City of Milwaukee. We are witnessing growth in the suburban communities while we are struggling to attract business into our city that would spur long term job growth. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Professor Marc Levine said the comparison, in part, reflects the general stagnation of the central Milwaukee economy, with the job base in the county — and especially in the city — having eroded for two decades. Data has shown that the highest ridership of the current transit system is emanating from the north side and northwest side of the City of Milwaukee (**most recent data attached**).

Marquette University economics Professor Abdur Chowdhury also noted that the divergence in job creation between Milwaukee County and the metropolitan area's three suburban counties is a long-standing trend. And with those counties poorly connected to Milwaukee by mass transit, relatively few African Americans have secured employment in the part of the metropolitan area generating most of the job growth, he said in an email. "This racial-spatial mismatch, a result of Milwaukee's hyper-segregation, is a central economic challenge facing the region," Chowdhury said.

So why are we pursuing the current Streetcar system without taking into account these vital economic statistics? How can we justify the approval of a system that does not address existing economic conditions in the areas of greatest needs with the highest negative economic indicators that gives the City of Milwaukee a persistent negative image?

And, how can a Mayor who said after hearing the familiar statistics of the City of Milwaukee being No. 1 in residential segregation, No. 1 in black poverty, No. 1 in the racial gap in student test scores, and No. 1 in the incarceration rate of African American males (I quote): "I am embarrassed to be the Mayor of this city when I see some of these horrific figures." How in the world can our Mayor continue to move forward with a project that will be for the haves, once again leaving the have-nots behind?

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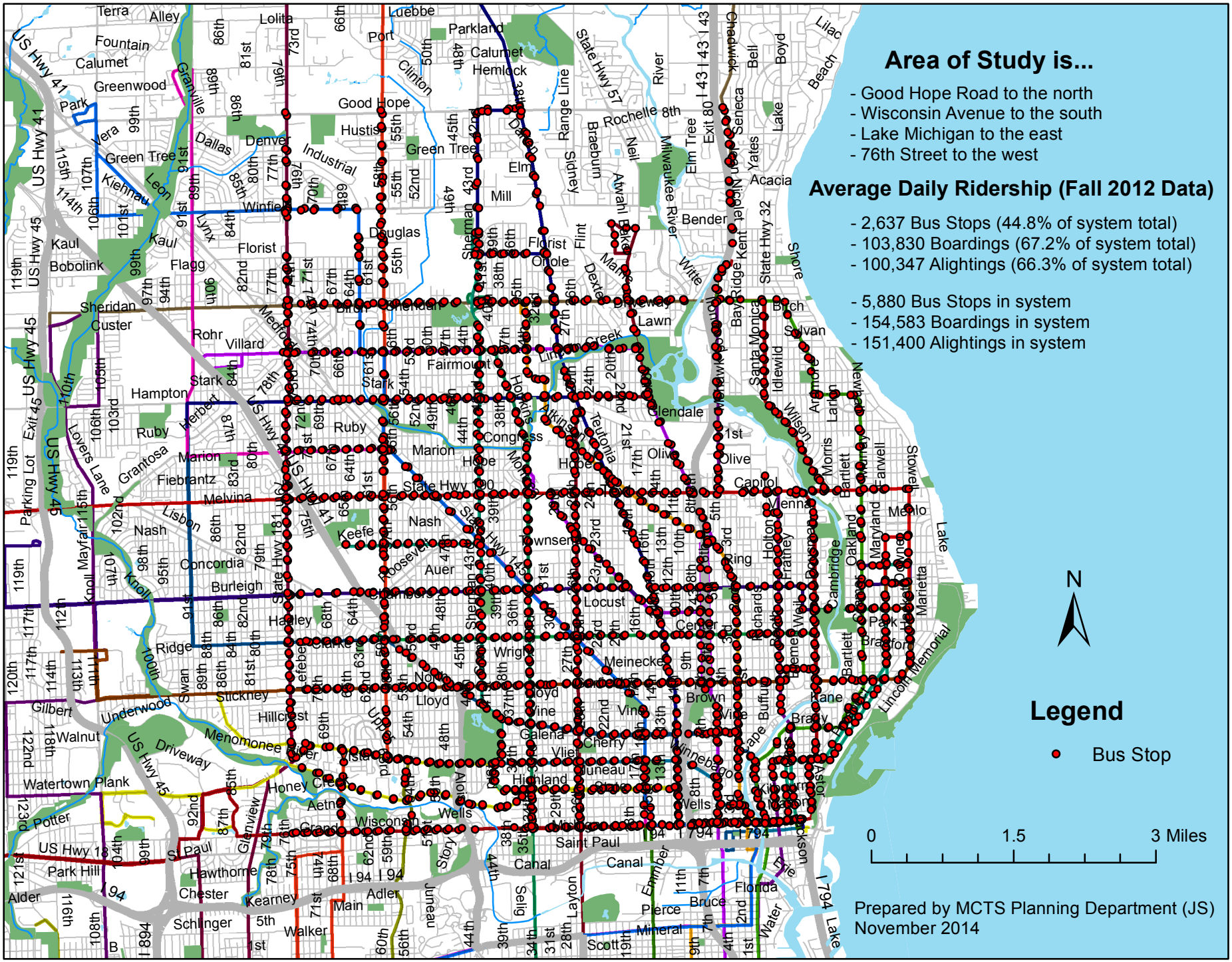
MCTS Average Daily Ridership for Selected Portion of Milwaukee County