Earlier this year, the initial series of public informational “scoping” meetings for this phase of the KRM project was held. Over two hundred people attended the scoping meetings and more sought information on-line to learn about alternatives proposed for the KRM Commuter Link. The purpose of the meetings was to obtain community input on the range of alternatives proposed for study, associated impacts, and opportunities for public involvement. By the March 24th deadline for the initial scoping comments, more than 150 comments were received for consideration and inclusion in the project’s scoping report.

Preliminary review indicates over 80% of all people submitting comments expressed support for the commuter rail alternative, with less than 4% indicating opposition. Other alternatives that are being compared to commuter rail and that were presented for consideration at the scoping meetings included:

- No-Build - which reflects the current transportation system;
- Transportation Systems Management - which reflects the best that can be done with improved bus service to address the identified problems in the corridor without major capital investment in new infrastructure; and
- Bus Rapid Transit - which would include the development and operation of a high-capacity and capital-intensive commuter bus service.

Approximately 83% of the comments were received from people who identified themselves as coming from within the KRM corridor, with another 8% coming from other areas in Southeastern Wisconsin and 3% from northeastern Illinois.

Public feedback provided an important influence in the screening evaluation of the above alternatives. Other factors being taken into consideration include cost, environmental impact, potential for land use development and redevelopment, and improved mobility for users of each alternative under review.

A copy of the full Scoping Report is available on the project website at www.KRMonline.org. Additional public information meetings and public hearings will be held later in the study.

The proposed Commuter Rail alternative is similar to Metra and would operate on existing rail lines between Kenosha and Milwaukee.

The proposed Commuter Rail alternative is similar to Metra and would operate on existing rail lines between Kenosha and Milwaukee.
At its April 5th meeting, the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) Steering Committee determined to advance the No-Build, Transportation Systems Management (TSM), and Commuter Rail alternatives for further evaluation. Consideration of these alternatives will continue as part of the Alternatives Analysis work including the production of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). This decision removes the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternative from further consideration.

**Transit Alternatives**

**ADVANCED FOR FURTHER STUDY:**
- No-Build
- Transit Systems Management
- Commuter Rail

**REMOVED FROM FURTHER STUDY:**
- Bus Rapid Transit

A cross section of an existing street is illustrated (above). The same street with bi-directional bus lanes added is illustrated (below). Note that in the second illustration, parking is eliminated and barriers would separate the exclusive bus lanes from the other remaining lanes.
Bus Rapid Transit envisions the use of higher-capacity buses operating over exclusive and semi-exclusive rights-of-way providing line-haul public transportation in a manner similar to that provided by commuter rail.

Although Bus Rapid Transit is used in a limited number of applications throughout North America, its application within the KRM corridor is severely hampered by limitations in available right-of-way, necessitating extensive property acquisition and the attendant and substantial environmental and neighborhood impacts. In addition, Bus Rapid Transit has yet to prove itself comparable to fixed guideway transit modes such as commuter rail in terms of land development and redevelopment potential despite similar capital cost.

This decision by the KRM Steering Committee to effectively screen-out the BRT alternative from further consideration is being reviewed with both the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Bureau of Equity and Environmental Services of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Of the alternatives remaining under consideration, the No-Build alternative would mirror current conditions as they pertain to public transportation service throughout Southeastern Wisconsin. The No-Build alternative represents the current transportation system in the corridor and provides a basis for comparison of the other alternatives. The TSM alternative represents the best that can be done to enhance bus service without making a major capital investment.

It will be from among these three remaining alternatives – No-Build, TSM and Commuter Rail – that a Locally-Preferred Alternative (LPA) will be selected by the KRM Steering Committee later this year. The LPA and project financial plan, including local and state funding and financing elements, would serve as the foundation for an application to the FTA for discretionary capital funding in 2007 to permit the project to proceed into Preliminary Engineering.
ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES: No-Build

- No-Build represents the current transportation system throughout the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee corridor;
- This alternative provides the basis for something to compare the other alternatives to.

ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES: Transportation Systems Management (TSM)

Transportation Systems Management reflects the best that can be done to address the identified problems in the corridor without major capital investment in new infrastructure.

TSM is a bus-based alternative that is the best that can be done without major capital investment. It would:

- Directly connect with and be coordinated with existing Metra service to and from Kenosha;
- Use and improve on current transit services;
- Increase corridor and feeder service;
- Provide more park-ride lots;
- Include signal priority for buses at intersections;
- Use larger buses;
- Include some reserved lanes where possible;
- Include passenger information systems.
The Commuter Rail alternative would be similar to and coordinated with existing Metra service to and from Kenosha.

Communities could choose to build new contemporary stations or renovate existing stations like the Racine station shown below.

**Commuter Rail is similar to existing Metra commuter rail service in northeastern Illinois. It would:**

- Directly connect with and be coordinated with existing Metra service to and from Kenosha;
- Incorporate a through-service option;
- Also incorporate an independent-service option;
- Include station locations and a service level similar to the bus-based alternatives;
- Use an existing railroad line already in place for freight service;
- Contribute to economic and community development and redevelopment.
ABOUT THE ALTERNATIVES: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus Rapid Transit would entail the development and operation of a high-capacity and capital-intensive commuter bus service.

Bus Rapid Transit is a high-capacity bus-based alternative intended to provide service comparable to commuter rail. It would:

- Directly connect with and be coordinated with existing Metra service to and from Kenosha;
- Include all TSM improvements;
- Operate in exclusive or semi-exclusive busway segments;
- Include on-line stations like rail systems;
- Have compatible floor heights for fast boarding at stations.

BRT would operate in exclusive or semi-exclusive lanes and include on-line stations like rail systems.
A key component of the KRM Commuter Link project is determining the extent of opportunities for transit-oriented land development and redevelopment (TOD) around the proposed station areas. Transit-oriented development is a moderate to high density mix of land uses that is focused on a proposed transit station and that can generate transit use. Such land uses would include housing, retail shops, offices, and public uses and would be concentrated within one half mile or a ten minute walk of the transit station. This kind of development and redevelopment is intended to capitalize on the needs and opportunities of transit users, commuters, and local residents, and to provide a desirable pedestrian-oriented environment.

TOD workshops have been held in all of the communities with proposed stations including Kenosha, Somers, Racine, Caledonia, Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, Cudahy/St Francis, and Milwaukee. The workshops were well attended attracting a good cross section of elected officials, planning staff, developers, property owners, and concerned residents. Workshop participants were asked to list the most important problems confronting each station area, identify projects or improvements they would like to see made in the station area, and then share their ideas with the group.

In the Racine and Cudahy/St. Francis workshops, many participants expressed the opinion that the KRM project could have a positive development incentive and become a catalyst for revitalization efforts. In communities such as Caledonia, KRM was viewed by many as an opportunity for shaping future development. In all cases, the impacts of station area plans including land use development and redevelopment, economic impacts, urban design compatibility and development policy will be considered as station area plans that stimulate and accommodate desired development are formulated. Proposed station area plans were brought back to the public for review and comment at a second series of workshops.

A Station Area Development Portfolio will be created for each station to identify proposed land use changes and attendant economic impacts. Each community will be asked to endorse their station area plan and to adopt policies, plans, and regulations that support the plans. Support of these policies and plans will be a critical factor toward enabling the KRM Commuter Link to be implemented.
Following completion of more analysis of the alternatives, another series of public meetings will be held throughout the corridor later this year. Once these meetings have been scheduled, notification will be sent out to those on the newsletter mailing list and will be posted on the study website at www.KRMonline.org.

In the interim, if you’d like to learn more about the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Link or would like a member of the staff of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to speak to your neighborhood group, community organization or business gathering, please call.

Community input is instrumental in shaping the decisions made as the project progresses. In addition to the participants who attended the Scoping meetings and those that have provided written comments at meetings or on the website, we want to hear from you. To schedule a meeting, phone Ken Yunker, Deputy Director at Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission at (262) 547-6721.

WE'RE ON THE WEB
For more information or to submit public comments, visit us at www.KRMonline.org

NEXT PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING OPPORTUNITIES

SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
W239 N1812 ROCKWOOD DRIVE
P.O. BOX 1607 | WAUKESHA, WI 53187-1607

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