



K R M

A PLAN FOR THE KENOSHA-RACINE-MILWAUKEE COMMUTER CONNECTION

NEXT PHASE OF KRM PLANNING PROJECT BEGINS

The next phase of transit planning, officially called the “EIS and Project Development Phase”, for the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) project, has begun.

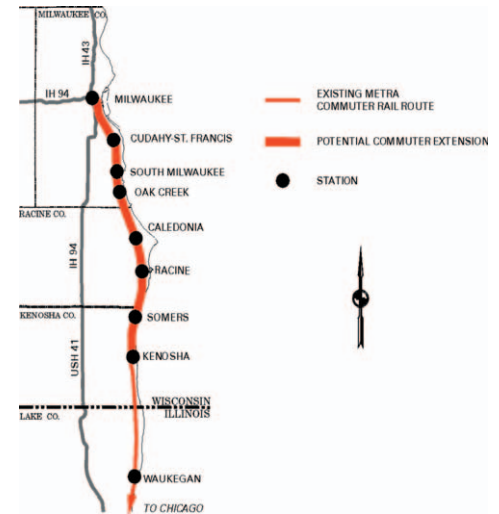
The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission is undertaking the project on behalf of the Intergovernmental Partnership (IGP) of the counties and cities of Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), and the Regional Planning Commission. A consulting team has been hired and plans include involving the community early, in a series of public information meetings.

The outcome from this phase of the study, which includes two basic components, will determine if the project will advance to Preliminary Engineering and eventual implementation. The first component is the development of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement which is necessary to secure a favorable Record of Decision from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the project’s primary source of funding. The second is performing an Alternatives Analysis, reviewing and refining the commuter rail and bus alternatives considered to date, and recommending one for implementation. FTA funding will depend on how the recommended

alternative compares to other similar projects nationwide based on FTA project criteria, including cost effectiveness.

The alternatives being considered as part of the Alternative Analysis process are:

- **No-Build.** This alternative essentially reflects the current transportation system throughout the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee corridor.
- **Transportation System Management (TSM).** This alternative reflects the “best that can be done” to address the identified problems in the corridor without major capital investment in new infrastructure such as a new transit guideway. The TSM Alternative will utilize and improve upon the current transit services in the corridor using measures such as improved bus service and increased park-and-ride capacity in strategic locations but without making a major capital investment. The TSM Alternative will represent a level of capital investment that is greater than the No-Build Alternative but substantially less than either the Bus Rapid Transit or Commuter Rail Alternatives.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).** This alternative will include the development and operation of a high-capacity and capital-intensive commuter bus service between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee that would be coordinated with the existing Kenosha-Chicago Metra service. This alternative will build and improve upon the TSM Alternative by incorporating the use of exclusive and/or semi-exclusive rights-of-way, on-line passenger stations, and vehicles with floor heights compatible with station platforms that improve passenger accessibility while reducing boarding and alighting times to provide a service comparable and competitive with commuter rail.



- **Commuter Rail.** This alternative will include the development and operation of commuter rail service between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee similar to that which is currently provided between Kenosha and Chicago. The service would be coordinated with the existing Kenosha-Chicago Metra service. Service options to be examined under this alternative include service requiring a cross-platform transfer at Kenosha or Waukegan and a through service that would not require such a transfer. Equipment options to be examined include conventional locomotive-hauled trains and self-propelled coaches.

Both the BRT and Commuter Rail Alternatives will include stations for each of the communities identified in the previous phase of the KRM study including Kenosha, Somers, Racine, Caledonia, Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, Cudahy/St. Francis and Milwaukee.

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WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Here in Southeastern Wisconsin, community leaders have long recognized the potential for improving transit in the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee corridor. By better connecting Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee to each other as well as to northeast Illinois and Chicago, both economic and population growth within the corridor and in the Milwaukee-Chicago mega-metro area will likely result, along with better access to jobs, culture, and entertainment. Here's a recap of what's been accomplished so far and where the effort stands today:

- In 1998, SEWRPC completed a feasibility study concluding that establishing a 33 mile commuter rail service from Kenosha – through Racine – to Milwaukee (KRM) is technically and financially feasible.
- An alternatives analysis of commuter rail and bus alternatives for the KRM corridor followed looking at costs, benefits and impacts of both commuter rail and bus alternatives. In the Spring of 2003, public hearings were conducted with more than 1,280 people indicating their support for the commuter rail alternative with only 20 opposed. The study advisory committee recommended the project move into Preliminary Engineering with the State being the project sponsor of the proposed commuter rail, and that the proposed commuter rail be funded by Federal and state dollars.
- State legislation was enacted in the Summer of 2003 defining the State's role with respect to commuter rail as providing capital and operating financial assistance to locally-sponsored commuter rail projects and requiring a local funding share of commuter rail implementation.
- In February 2005 an Intergovernmental Partnership (IGP) was formed among the County Executives and Mayors of Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine, the Secretary of WisDOT, and the Chairman of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The IGP agreed to conduct the necessary technical and environmental studies to permit the project to proceed to implementation. Each member of the IGP, other than the Regional Planning Commission, appointed a representative to serve on the KRM Project Steering Committee with the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission serving as lead agency, project manager, and fiscal agent for the next phase of the KRM study. The role of the Steering Committee is to provide overall direction and oversight of the study.
- Also in early 2005, a group of business leaders from the Greater Milwaukee Committee joined with elected officials representing the Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee areas and representatives from Transit Now, a non-profit group, to determine how to advance the KRM project. The group works to develop support for critical issues including governance and financing.
- In July of 2005, the State Legislature and Governor enacted legislation creating a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) serving Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties which may determine to serve as sponsor of the commuter rail project and to provide the necessary local funding.

AFFILIATION	INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIP MEMBER	STEERING COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE
City of Kenosha	John M. Antaramian, Mayor	Len Brandrup, Director, Department of Transportation
City of Milwaukee	Tom Barrett, Mayor	Jeffrey J. Mantes, Commissioner of Public Works
City of Racine	Gary Becker, Mayor	Richard M. Jones, Commissioner of Public Works
Kenosha County	Allan K. Kehl, County Executive	Frederick J. Patrie, Director of Public Works, and Committee Chairman
Milwaukee County	Scott K. Walker, County Executive	Robert R. Dennik, Director, Economic and Community Development Division
Racine County	William L. McReynolds, County Executive	Glenn M. Lampark, Director of Public Works
WisDOT	Frank J. Busalacchi, Secretary	Mark J. Wolfgram, Administrator, Division of Transportation Investment Management
SEWRPC	Thomas H. Buestrin, Chairman	

WHERE WE ARE & OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The improvement and expansion of public transit in this heavily traveled corridor has the potential to provide a public transit alternative which will have travel times competitive with the automobile, support and encourage more efficient higher density development, reduce automobile traffic volume and congestion, reduce transportation-related air pollutants and energy consumption, provide a high quality alternative when IH 94 is undergoing reconstruction, and meet the needs of those who are unable or who choose not to use an automobile.

The corridor extending from Milwaukee to Chicago covers only 9% of the area in the thirteen counties comprising the combined Milwaukee and Chicago metropolitan area, but represents 26% of the population and 36% of the employment. Population density is nearly 3 times higher and job density is nearly 4 times higher in this corridor than in the combined metropolitan area, and is expected to grow. The portion of the corridor in southeastern Wisconsin lacks transportation options for travel between communities in the corridor, as well as for travel between southeastern Wisconsin and northeastern Illinois. People with limited or no access to private automobiles are particularly restricted in their ability to access jobs and education, and census data indicates that 15% of the households within the KRM corridor in southeastern Wisconsin do not have an automobile.

Existing transit services do operate within the KRM corridor, but consist largely of separate local systems with services that are slow, operate only in a limited service area, and are not coordinated with each other. Improved transit is necessary for the corridor's employers to find the workers they need to grow their businesses and for people within the corridor to access jobs as well as education and recreation. With limited arterial street and highway capacity, growing traffic volumes and congestion, and extremely limited opportunities for new highways, it is time to develop high quality and attractive transit service in the corridor that is competitive with the private automobile in terms of travel time, cost, and convenience.

High quality and attractive transit service can stimulate desirable and positive land use development and redevelopment in the older major cities such as Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine, in the older suburban communities such as Cudahy, St. Francis, and South Milwaukee, and in the newer developing communities such as Caledonia, Oak Creek, and Somers. An investment in high-quality transit service will generate additional investment in communities.

With guidance from the Steering Committee, the Regional Planning Commission has selected a consulting team to undertake the next phase of

the KRM plan. Kevin Grigg of EarthTech leads the consulting team serving in the role of project manager. In addition to EarthTech, the firms of HNTB and Cambridge Systematics play major roles in the effort. Other members of the consultant team include American Design, Bay Ridge Consulting, Connecticut Transportation Group, Great Lakes Archeological Research Center, Heritage Research, Martinsek & Associates, and Valerie Kretchmer Associates.

Public participation is important to developing sound recommendations and selecting a transit alternative that can be supported by the community. One of the project team's goals is to keep the public informed and to incorporate their feedback into the decision making process. Here are some of the tools we will use to help achieve that goal.

This is the first in a series of **four quarterly newsletters** that will be produced to provide information as the KRM planning process moves forward. Let us know what you think and provide us with names and addresses of people who might like to be added to the mailing list.

Make sure to attend the first round of **public involvement meetings** coming up in February (see schedule on page four). At least three more rounds of public involvement meetings will be held, approximately one round every three to four months, as the study progresses. Public involvement meetings will be advertised in local newspapers, in the KRM newsletters, and on the project website.

If you prefer to get your information and participate electronically, visit the **KRM website**. The website will be updated as new project information becomes available. And the site is interactive so you can provide your comments online. Visit us on the web at www.KRMonline.org. Or just search for the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission homepage at www.SEWRPC.org and you'll find a link to the KRM webpage. Other opportunities for public involvement will occur as the project proceeds and we'll do our best to make sure you are made aware of them.

If you have questions about the study or its components you may contact Ken Yunker, Deputy Director at Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission at (262) 547-6721. If you'd like to be added to the mailing list to receive future newsletters, you can log on to the website and sign-up electronically or write to SEWRPC, P.O. Box 1607, Waukesha, Wisconsin, 53187.

WHERE WE ARE GOING

In the next 15 months the focus will be to conduct an Alternatives Analysis and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (see page one for details). The Regional Planning Commission and the consulting team hopes to have an opportunity to meet and work with community members through public involvement activities as the study moves forward.

This first round of public information meetings is part of the project scoping process, used to identify issues and concerns early in the study. All interested or affected residents, property owners, civic and community leaders, business owners, and other community members throughout the corridor are encouraged to attend, learn more about the project, and most importantly, provide feedback and comments.

PUBLIC INFORMATION SCOPING MEETINGS SCHEDULED

SCHEDULE OF KRM PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 21, 2006

6:00-8:00 pm (presentation: 6:45 pm)

Madrigano Auditorium

Kenosha Gateway Technical College

3520 30th Avenue, Kenosha

Wednesday, February 22, 2006

6:00-8:00 pm (presentation: 6:45 pm)

Great Lakes Room, Racine Building

Racine Gateway Technical College

901 Pershing Drive, Racine

Thursday, February 23, 2006

6:00-8:00 pm (presentation: 6:45 pm)

Harbor Lights Room

Milwaukee Downtown Transit Center

909 E Michigan Avenue, Milwaukee

WE'RE ON THE WEB

www.KRMonline.org

Public participation is a fundamental component of this DEIS and Alternatives Analysis phase of the KRM project. The activities planned throughout this study phase are designed to facilitate open, ongoing, two-way communication and allow the study team to gather suggestions, opinions, perspectives, and values from the community. This public participation will provide valuable information and feedback in order to make the best possible decisions.

This KRM planning initiative kicks off with several public information meetings to be held the week of February 20th in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee.

The public information meetings will be conducted in "open house" format with staffed information displays allowing those who are interested to attend at any time during the two hour meeting. A twenty minute presentation will also be made by Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff at the times noted in the schedule at left. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission staff and members of the study team will be available throughout the evening to provide information and hear community input. Information will be provided on:

- The purpose and need for the project;
- The objectives of the Alternative Analysis, DEIS, and scoping process;
- The scope and schedule of the KRM Alternative Analysis;
- Issues to be addressed throughout the course of the study, including potential impacts; and
- Opportunities for continued public involvement and participation.

The study team welcomes community feedback including ideas or concerns relating to any component of the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter connection. Community input will be documented and incorporated to help shape the final study recommendations.

KRM Station Area Design Workshops are also being conducted to identify the potential impacts of commuter rail on land use development and redevelopment at each rail station along the corridor. This will involve completion of an inventory of existing conditions, estimation of potential influence of commuter rail on land development and redevelopment, and preparation of station area land use development plans and policies. Community participation is vital to the creation of station area plans that stimulate and accommodate desired development and redevelopment. Eventually, each community will be asked to endorse their station area development plan and to adopt policies, plans, and regulations to support them if commuter rail is implemented. As workshops are scheduled, information will be posted on the KRM website at www.KRMonline.org.

This project will have a major impact on the region. Don't let this opportunity to be involved in the early stages of an exciting transit initiative pass you by. Attend one or all of the public involvement meetings and encourage your neighbors, colleagues, and friends to participate as well.

Public involvement is crucial to moving the project forward. If you can't make it to a meeting, check out the KRM website, view the same information that was presented at the public meeting, and let us hear from you.

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