

KENOSHA COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2012-2016



NEWSLETTER 1

MARCH 2011

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), at the request of the City and County of Kenosha, is preparing a short-range transit development plan for Kenosha County covering the years 2012-2016. This study will include:

- A rigorous evaluation of existing Kenosha Area Transit and Western Kenosha County Transit services to review their existing performance and identify areas of good and poor performance.
- An assessment of unmet transit travel needs for resident trips within Kenosha County and to/from adjacent counties.
- Recommendations for alternative transit service improvements and capital improvements for both the City and County systems.
- The preparation of a planning document that will help City and County officials implement transit recommendations through annual transit budgets and capital and operations programming.

KENOSHA AREA TRANSIT SYSTEM (KAT)

In 2010, KAT operated 10 regular routes, 24 peak-hour tripper routes serving schools, and one streetcar in downtown Kenosha. Of the 10 regular routes, seven passed through the Downtown Transit Center located on the north side of the Central Business District. KAT buses meet at the Center on a “pulse” schedule to facilitate transfers between routes.

- Service Hours: The regular routes run from 6 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. on weekdays and from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays. KAT does not operate on Sundays.
- Service Frequency: Most buses arrive every 30 minutes during weekday peak periods, and every 60 minutes during weekday off-peak periods and Saturdays.
- Fares: Adults pay \$1.50 cash fare. Seniors and people with disabilities pay \$0.70 and students pay \$0.75.

In 2011, KAT made several significant service changes, mostly due to cuts in service to the Village of Pleasant Prairie. Routes 35 and 36, providing service to indus-

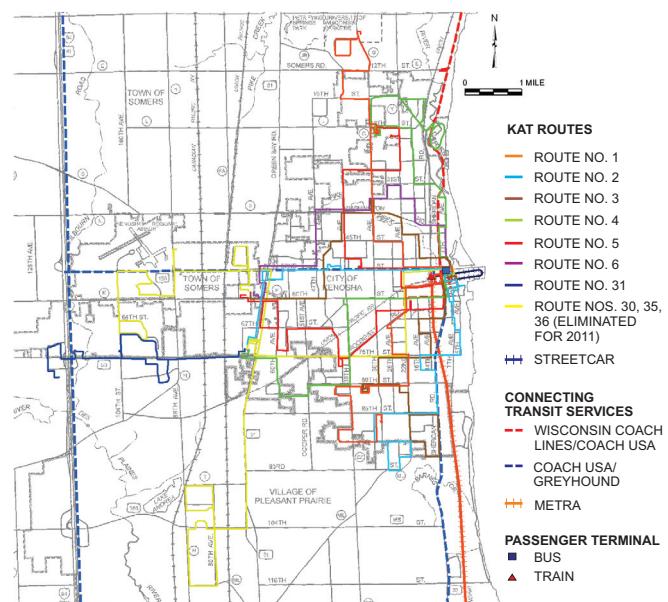
KENOSHA COUNTY TRANSIT PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Kenosha County Transit Development Plan is being developed under the guidance of an Advisory Committee appointed by the City of Kenosha Mayor and the Kenosha County Executive specifically for this study. The Committee includes representatives from the various units of government in Kenosha County and a variety of agencies and populations with an interest in transportation. A list of the Advisory Committee members can be found on the Kenosha County Development Plan Summary Brochure or the website: www.sewrpc.org/kenoshatransit plan.

trial parks west and south of Kenosha, were eliminated completely. Route 31 was modified to reduce service to Pleasant Prairie and serve some areas previously served by Route 36. Route 30 (which served as a rapid connection from the Downtown Transit Center to the transfer point at Southport Mall) was also eliminated. The following map shows the eliminated routes in yellow.

The City of Kenosha and Kenosha County jointly fund the “Care-A-Van” program. Care-A-Van provides

KAT ROUTES AND CONNECTING TRANSIT SERVICES: 2010



PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

The following transit service objectives provide a basis for measuring the performance of the transit systems, identifying unmet transit service needs, and designing and recommending improvements:

1. The public transit system should effectively serve the existing land use pattern and support the implementation of planned land uses, meeting the demand and need for transit services, and particularly the needs of the transit-dependent population;
2. The transit system should promote effective utilization of transit service and operate service that is reliable and provides for convenience and comfort;
3. The transit system should promote efficiency in the total transportation system and help minimize the amount of energy consumed to serve travel by residents of the transit service area;
4. The public transit system should be economical and efficient, meeting all other objectives at the lowest possible cost.

door-to-door transportation east of IH 94 to seniors or people with disabilities who cannot use, or live outside the service area of, KAT's fixed routes. The service allows KAT to comply with Federal requirements that fixed-route transit systems provide paratransit service. Care-A-Van is available during the same hours as the fixed-route service. The fare for Care-A-Van is \$2.50.

Findings from the Evaluation of KAT

In 2009, KAT provided good-to-excellent coverage of population, employment, and activity centers east of IH 94. The transit system had reasonably good service to the high-employment areas in the Village of Pleasant Prairie. However, the elimination of bus service to those areas in 2011 created a large gap in coverage.

KAT's service does not start until 6:00 a.m., operates only until 7:30 p.m. on weekdays and until 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and does not operate on Sundays. This means that people who have early or late shifts or who work on weekends cannot depend entirely on the transit system for work trips, even though their job may be on a bus route. Commission staff surveyed employers and determined shift schedules for about 5,300 jobs in the KAT service area. Less than 9 percent of those jobs were fully served by the transit system schedule.

Overall, KAT compares favorably to "peer" transit systems in Wisconsin and nationally with respect to ridership, service levels, and operating costs. In general, KAT provides a high level of service and has high ridership for its service area population size. KAT

expenses per mile and per hour of service are higher than the peer averages, but because of high ridership, the transit system is more cost-effective than the peer system average.

The transit system has a positive impact on the efficiency of the transportation system in Kenosha. KAT has a higher fuel efficiency per passenger mile than the average automobile trip. The transit system also helps reduce traffic volumes on some streets. If the people using public transit traveled instead by automobile, traffic volumes on some streets would increase between 1 and 7 percent during peak-hour travel.

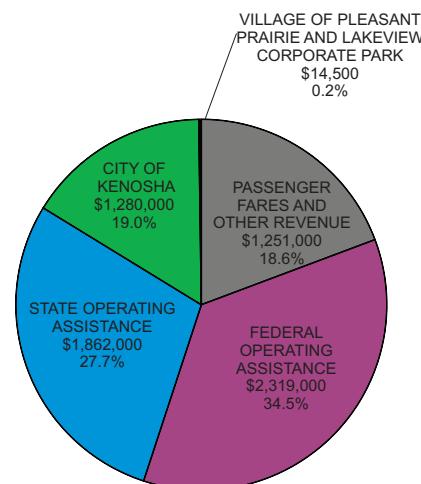
Routes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 30, and 35 were the best-performing routes in the system. Routes 1, 31, and 36 had weekday performance levels consistently worse than average. Of the three, Route 36 was the poorest performer in every measure. The Kenosha Downtown Streetcar's annual service effectiveness (22 boarding passengers per revenue hour) and cost effectiveness (\$5.10 per passenger) compare very favorably to the system's regular bus routes.

Transit travel times are significantly longer than automobile times for some trips. Long transit travel times are caused by indirect route alignments on some routes, or the need to make several transfers to complete a trip by bus.

Future Funding Considerations for KAT

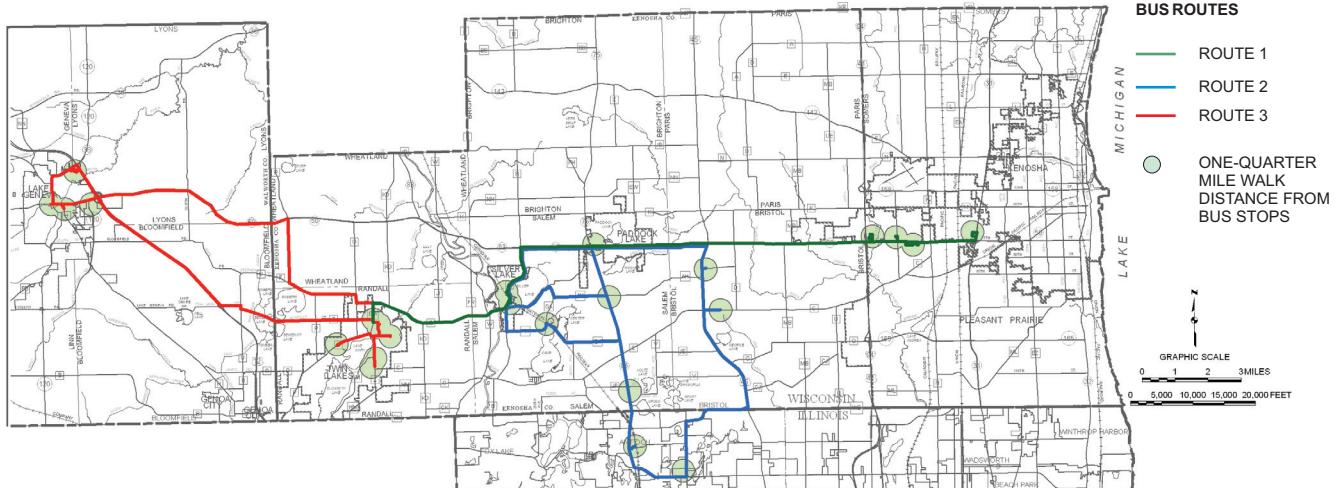
The transit system's operating expenses totaled about \$6.7 million in 2010. The figure below shows the distribution of funding sources for transit operating expenses. The State has traditionally tried to fund up to 60 percent of operating expenses with a combination of

WHO PAYS FOR KENOSHA AREA TRANSIT'S OPERATING EXPENSES?



Source: City of Kenosha 2010 Budget.

WESTERN KENOSHA COUNTY TRANSIT ROUTES



State and Federal funds. In 2012, the transit system will likely face a combination of cuts in both State and Federal transit operating assistance. Commission staff will prepare a set of improvements and actions that attempt to address the concerns identified in the KAT evaluation and the potential financial constraints.

WESTERN KENOSHA COUNTY TRANSIT SYSTEM (WKCT)

In September 2007, the Kenosha County Department of Human Services began operation of the Western Kenosha County Transit. The transit system currently operates three fixed bus routes (as shown on the above map) and also provides advance reservation, door-to-door service for people who cannot use the fixed routes.

- Service Frequency: Buses arrive every 1 to 2 hours on weekdays.
- Fares: For fixed routes, adults pay a cash fare of \$2 for a one-way trip, or \$10 for a monthly pass. For demand-response, adults pay \$3, or \$2 if they have physical or cognitive disabilities.

Findings from the Evaluation of WKCT

WKCT provides good service to the concentrations of population, employment, and activity centers in the western Kenosha County and the surrounding area.

Ridership on the transit system has been increasing consistently since its start in 2007. That increase must continue in order for the system to compare favorably to similar rural transit systems. The system currently carries 0.06 passengers per revenue vehicle mile, while “mature” rural transit systems generally carry an average of 0.2 passengers per revenue vehicle mile.

Routes 1 and 3 (shown in green and red on the map) had the highest ridership and lowest cost per passenger. Route 2 (shown in blue) had the lowest ridership and

highest cost per passenger, although the commuter service to Antioch on that route has good ridership in mornings and evenings. The County could improve efficiency by reducing the number of trips on that route and providing demand-response service with the same vehicle.

Future Funding Considerations for WKCT

Annual operating expenses for WKCT service were about \$605,000 in 2010. Of that, about \$38,000 (about 6 percent) came from Kenosha County tax levy. The County has been using start-up Federal funding for rural transit that pays up to 80 percent of net operating costs. However, that funding program will no longer be available in 2012, and the County will need to transition to a lower level of Federal and State transit operating assistance. If the County wishes to keep its levy contribution constant, a reduction in WKCT service is likely.

ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS FOR TRANSIT TRAVEL OUTSIDE KENOSHA COUNTY

- Since 2006, when the City of Racine eliminated bus service to the UW-Parkside campus, the only transit service between Kenosha and Racine has been provided by Wisconsin Coach Lines, which operates eight trips a day along STH 32 between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee. There is an unmet need for more frequent and convenient transit service connecting the central business districts in the Cities of Kenosha and Racine.
- There is a need to restore transit service to UW-Parkside for students residing in the City of Racine.
- Based on data from Metra passengers in Kenosha County and data from the US Census, it is not clear that there is a great need for fixed-route bus service between Kenosha County and Lake County, at this time.

You are invited to attend one of three upcoming public informational meetings on the Kenosha County Transit Development Plan. At the meetings, you can learn more about the plan, discuss it with Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, Kenosha Area Transit, and Western Kenosha County Transit staffs, and comment on the work performed to date.

If you cannot attend one of the meetings, please visit the plan website to view the information presented, request a briefing by project staff, or comment on the project. You can submit written comments via mail, e-mail, or fax through April 30, 2011.

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PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

The public meetings are in an "open house" format, allowing you to attend at any time during the two-hour timeframe for each meeting. A short presentation will be made at 5:45 pm at each meeting. Attendees will have the opportunity to leave written comments, or speak to a court reporter or Commission staff for oral comments.

Tuesday, April 5, 2011, 4:30-6:30 pm

Kenosha Civil War Museum
5400 First Avenue, Kenosha

Wednesday, April 6, 2011, 4:30-6:30 pm

Kenosha County Job Center, Room N-2
8600 Sheridan Road, Kenosha

Thursday, April 14, 2011, 4:30-6:30 pm

Twin Lakes Village Hall
108 E Main Street, Twin Lakes

All meeting locations are wheelchair-accessible. Persons with special needs are asked to contact the SEWRPC office at (262) 547-6721 a minimum of three business days before the meetings so that appropriate arrangements can be made regarding access or mobility, review or interpretation of materials, active participation, or submission of comments.