

Preliminary Draft

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 286

RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN: 2010-2014

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

At the request of City and County of Racine, the Regional Planning Commission has prepared this study of public transit in Racine County for the years 2010-2014. The Regional Planning Commission has routinely prepared short-range transit system development plans for the City of Racine and surrounding area east of I-94. The last short-range plan prepared for the City of Racine was for the period 1998-2002 and outlined a plan for improving and expanding local transit service in the Racine area, including operating the bus routes using pulse scheduling to facilitate transfers, relocating the downtown transfer point, and extending service hours to include evening and Sunday operations.¹ The City requested that the present study include an update of the transit system development plan for its transit system. Racine County requested that the study address the potential need for public transportation service within the portion of Racine County west of I-94; for service connecting Racine County to Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Walworth Counties; and for service connecting western and eastern Racine County.

This document provides an in-depth evaluation of the 2008 operations of the City of Racine Belle Urban System (BUS), identification of unmet transit travel needs, and recommendations for transit service and capital improvements for the City bus system. The document also identifies all other existing public and human services transportation in Racine County; identifies potential unmet transit travel needs within Racine County and between Racine County and other Counties; and considers alternative transit service configurations that could address problems or deficiencies identified in the evaluation, or unmet needs. The plan includes recommendations for the coordination of all public transit services recommended for Racine County.

The preparation of the transit plan included:

¹ See SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 233, Racine Area Transit System Development Plan: 1998-2002, October 1997.

- Analysis of the existing land use patterns within Racine County, with particular attention given to identifying concentrations of employment and associated transit needs for work commuting and those facilities serving the County's elderly, disabled, and low-income populations; and
- Analyses of the travel habits, patterns, and needs of Racine County residents, particularly the transit-dependent population;
- A thorough evaluation of the performance of the existing public and private transportation services operating in Racine County;
- A careful evaluation of alternative courses of action for providing new or improved transit services that include consideration of the financial commitment and actions necessary to implement them.

The transit service improvements that are recommended under this new transit plan are for the period 2010 through 2014 and represent a refinement, and improvement and expansion, of the existing transit services that have evolved in Racine County.

STUDY AREA

This report will focus on the public transit services and needs within Racine County. The study will also consider the need to provide transit services between Racine County and major activity centers, such as employment centers and educational institutions in adjacent counties.

STUDY PURPOSE

This report is intended to serve the following purposes:

1. To evaluate the performance of the existing transit services in the County including City of Racine BUS routes and services, and the Racine County Human Services Department specialized transportation programs. This evaluation would include reviewing the Belle Urban System, the effectiveness of the existing route structure and schedules, and the financial performance of each service and component routes so as to identify areas of effective and efficient transit service operation, along with areas of ineffective or inefficient operation;

MAP 1-1

**PUBLIC TRANSIT ELEMENT OF THE RECOMMENDED
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN: YEAR 2035^a**

RAPID/EXPRESS ROUTE

— COMMUTER RAIL

— RAPID BUS ROUTE -
FREEWAY PORTION

— RAPID BUS ROUTE -
NONFREEWAY PORTION

— EXPRESS BUS ROUTE

TRANSIT STATIONS

▲ WITH PARKING

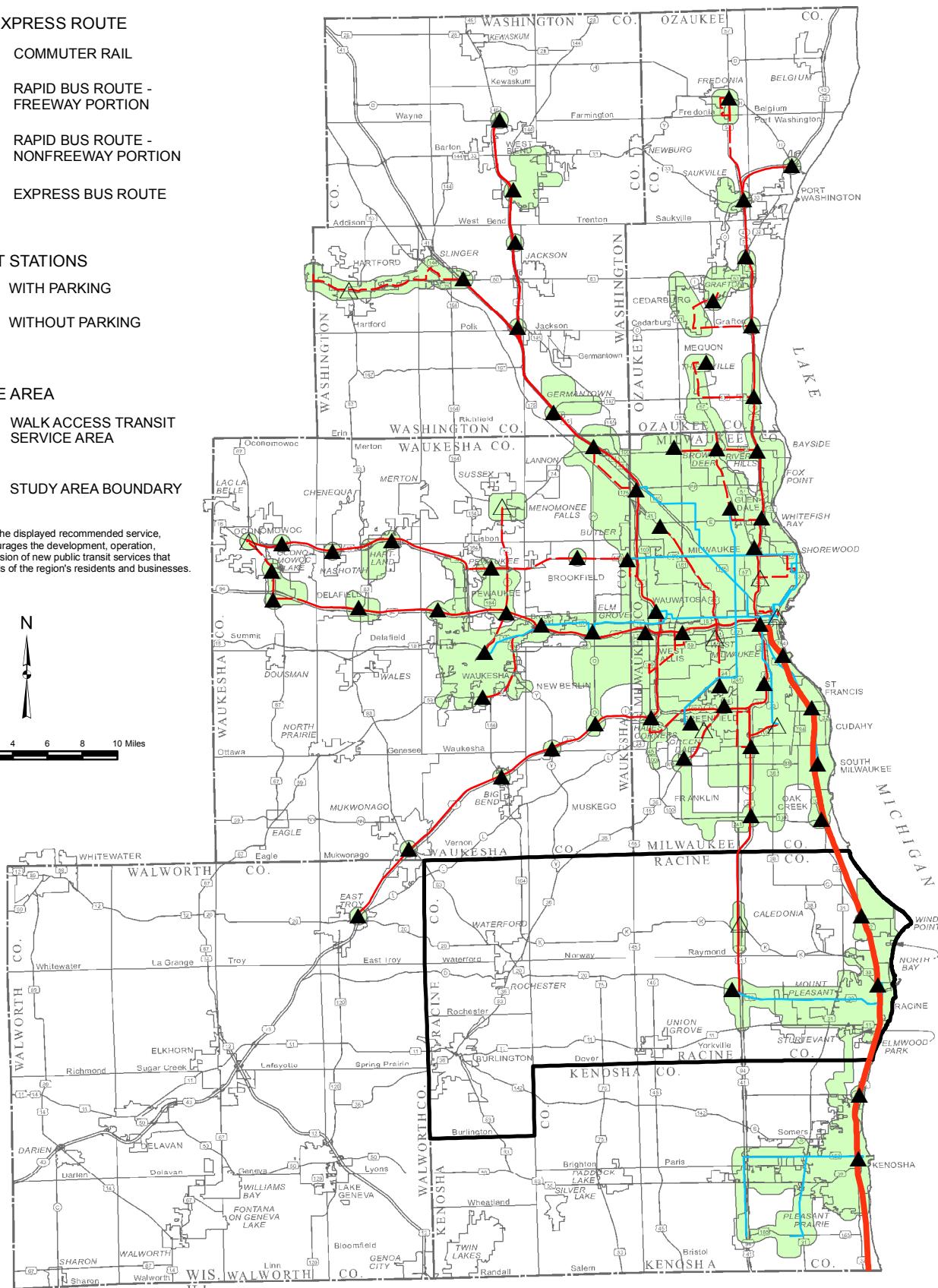
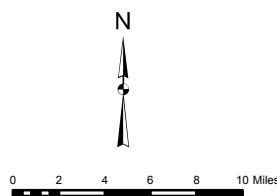
△ WITHOUT PARKING

SERVICE AREA

■ WALK ACCESS TRANSIT
SERVICE AREA

□ STUDY AREA BOUNDARY

^aIn addition to the displayed recommended service, the plan encourages the development, operation, and the expansion of new public transit services that meet the needs of the region's residents and businesses.



2. To identify those transit service needs of Racine County residents which are not being met, or not being met well, by existing transit services, including travel which cannot be made with existing services within reasonable travel times, or cannot be made with those services at all;
3. To design and evaluate alternative transit service improvements for the City of Racine BUS routes and paratransit service that address the problems and deficiencies identified in the performance evaluation. The potential improvements considered include:
 - Modifying or eliminating route segments, or routes, identified in the performance evaluation as having very poor performance;
 - Adjusting the alignments of the existing transit routes, along with improving service frequencies and expanding service periods, to provide for more direct travel, reduced travel times, and increased service availability so as to improve the overall attractiveness of using the transit system;
 - Consideration of an initial implementation stage of the transit recommendations for the Racine area presented in the Commission's adopted year 2035 long-range regional transportation system plan.²
4. To design and evaluate alternative transit service configurations that address the unmet transit service needs in Racine County outside of the BUS service area including west of IH 94. The potential alternatives considered include:
 - Promoting greater coordination between non-profit agencies and County agencies providing transportation services;
 - Establishing a shared-ride taxi system, or systems, to provide transit service to areas outside the BUS service area;
 - Providing route-deviation service outside the BUS service area to provide service in Racine County, and between Racine County and Kenosha, Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Walworth Counties, in which transit

² *The public transit element of the year 2035 plan recommends significant improvement and expansion of transit service in the Region over the next 30 years. (See SEWRPC Planning Report No. 49, A Regional Transportation System Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin: 2035, June 2006). Specific recommendations in the long-range plan pertaining to the Racine area include: improved and expanded local bus service for the greater Racine area with more frequent service and longer service hours; extending local bus service to developing areas, especially to serve individuals traveling to and from work; and extending or providing rapid and express bus service, and commuter rail service, through eastern Racine County including the City of Racine, connecting to downtown Milwaukee and the City of Kenosha.*

vehicles would follow flexible routes within a limited geographic area to provide door-to-door service; and

- Extending BUS routes to serve targeted residential, commercial, and employment areas with unmet transit service needs.
5. To prepare a planning document that would serve as a guide for County, City, and BUS officials with regard to implementing transit recommendations over a five year period; and
 6. To develop a plan that will ensure adequate financing of existing and planned transit services through available Federal and State transit funding programs.

SCOPE OF WORK

The scope of the work for preparing the transit plan involves the following eight steps:

1. Study organization;
2. The formulation of appropriate transit service objectives and supporting performance standards for both the City and County;
3. The collection of the socioeconomic, land use, and travel pattern data pertinent to the evaluation of the existing and proposed transit services;
4. The analysis of the operation of existing transit services, including the identification of any potential deficiencies and unmet transit service needs;
5. The design of transit service changes that could address the problems and deficiencies that were identified and any unmet transit service needs;
6. The evaluation of the proposed transit service changes;
7. The selection and documentation of a recommended plan; and
8. The identification of the actions to be taken by the City of Racine, Racine County, and each of the other concerned units of government to implement the recommended transit system improvements in an orderly and timely manner.

STUDY ORGANIZATION

The preparation of this transit plan was a joint effort by the staffs of Racine County, the City of Racine, and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. To provide guidance to the technical staffs in the preparation of this plan, and to involve concerned and affected public officials and citizen leaders more directly and actively in the development of transit service policies and improvement proposals, a work group was formed that includes representatives from all units of government in Racine County and a wide variety of agencies and populations with an interest in transportation in the County. A list of the agencies invited to serve on the Work Group is at the end of this chapter.

SCHEME OF PRESENTATION

After this introductory chapter, seven chapters present the findings of the major inventories and analyses conducted under the planning effort, and describe the plan recommendations. The specific chapters consist of:

- Chapter II, “Existing Transit Services,” which describes the current public and private transit services operating in Racine County.
- Chapter III, “Land Use and Travel Patterns,” which describes the land use, demographic, and economic characteristics of, and the travel habits and patterns in, Racine County.
- Chapter IV, “Public Transit Service Objectives and Standards,” which provides a set of transit service objectives and supporting performance standards and design criteria.
- Chapter V, “Evaluation of Existing Transit Services and Identification of Unmet Needs,” which describes how well existing transit services meet the objectives and standards, thereby identifying service-related problems and deficiencies and unmet transit service needs within the County.
- Chapter VI, “Alternative and Recommended Transit System Configurations,” which provides a description of the transit system configurations for 2010 through 2014 that have been considered and recommended by the Work Group.
- Chapter VII, “Summary and Conclusions,” which provides a brief overview of the significant findings and recommendations of the study.

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AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RACINE COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN WORK GROUP

Racine County Government

Racine County Executive's Office
Racine County Board of Supervisors, Heath and Human Development Committee
Racine County Human Services Department
Racine County Department of Planning and Development
Racine County Workforce Development Center

Other Government

City of Racine Mayor's Office	Village of Waterford
City of Racine Department of City Development	Village of Wind Point
City of Racine Transportation Department	Town of Burlington
City of Racine Transit and Parking Commission	Town of Dover
City of Burlington	Town of Norway
Village of Caledonia	Town of Raymond
Village of Mt. Pleasant	Town of Rochester
Village of Rochester	Town of Waterford
Village of Sturtevant	Town of Yorkville
Village of Union Grove	Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Business Organizations

Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce
Greater Union Grove Area Chamber of Commerce
Waterford Area Chamber of Commerce
Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Racine County Economic Development Corporation

Educational Institutions with Student Transportation Needs

Burlington Area School District
Racine Unified School District
Union Grove High School District
Waterford Union High School District

Non-Profit Organizations

Alliance on Mental Illness of Racine County	Racine County Opportunity Center
American Red Cross	Racine Hispanic Business and
Careers Industries, Inc.	Professionals Organization
First Choice Pre-Apprentice Jobs Training	Racine Interfaith Coalition
Hispanic Roundtable	Society's Assets, Inc.
Love, Inc.	Urban League of Racine and Kenosha

Transit Service Providers

First Transit, Inc.
Racine Belle Urban System