

RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN: 2011-2015



NEWSLETTER 1

OCTOBER 2009

The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), at the request of the City of Racine and Racine County, is preparing a short-range public transit service plan for Racine County for 2011-2015. This study, which is scheduled for completion in late 2010, will perform the following functions:

- Evaluate the performance of the City of Racine Belle Urban System (BUS);
- Evaluate other public and human services transportation provided in Racine County;
- Identify the unmet transit travel needs for trips within Racine County and to/from other counties;
- Recommend alternative transit service improvements for the BUS that address the performance evaluation, including unmet transit service needs;
- Recommend alternative transit service improvements for the remainder of the County outside the BUS service area, to address unmet transit needs;
- Prepare a short-range plan recommending modifications, improvements, and capital projects for all public transit services in Racine County, to guide annual transit budgeting and programming; and
- Estimate the financial requirements for public transit services in the County, compare to existing and projected available funding, identify funding shortfalls, and consider how to address those shortfalls.

EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

City of Racine Belle Urban System (BUS)

The BUS operates nine regular bus routes, several peak-hour tripper routes serving schools, and one rubber-tired trolley bus in the downtown area. Of the nine regular routes, eight pass through the Racine Metro Transit Center located on State Street, where buses meet at the Center on a “pulse” schedule to facilitate transfers between routes. The regular routes operate between 5:30 a.m. and midnight on weekdays, between 5:30 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and between 9:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on Sundays. Most buses arrive every 30 minutes during weekday peak periods, and between 30 and 60 minutes during week-

RACINE COUNTY TRANSIT PLAN WORKGROUP

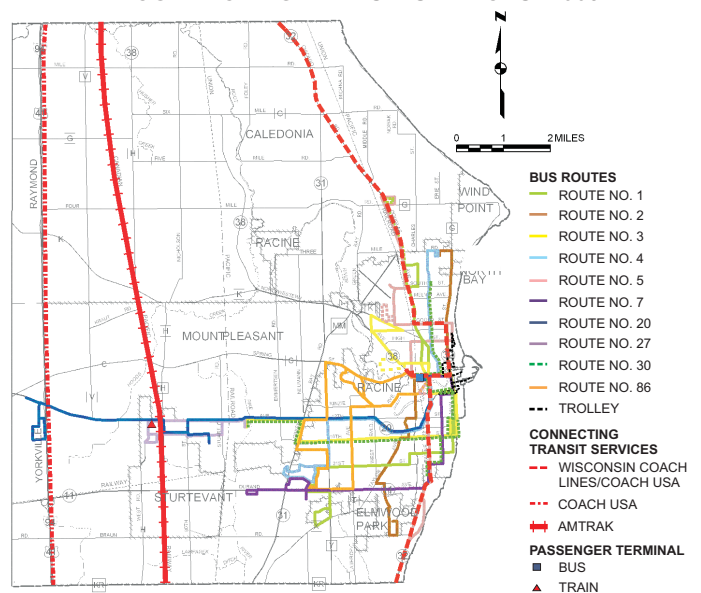
The Racine County Public Transit Plan is being developed under the guidance of a Workgroup formed specifically for this study. Representatives from all units of government in Racine County and a wide variety of agencies and populations with an interest in transportation in the County have been invited to participate in the Workgroup. A list of the agencies and organizations can be found on the Racine County Transit Plan Summary Brochure or the website: www.sewrpc.org/racinetransitplan

day off-peak periods, evenings, and weekends. Adults pay a cash fare of \$1.50, or \$1.25 after 7:00 p.m. Elderly and disabled individuals pay \$0.75, and youth pay \$1.25.

The BUS also provides Dial-A-Ride paratransit service (DART) for disabled individuals who are unable to use the fixed-route bus service, for trips made within three-quarters of a mile of a BUS route. DART is available during the same hours as the BUS fixed-route service. The fare for DART is \$2.50.

From 2004 to 2008, BUS total annual revenue vehicle hours of service were cut by about 4 percent, and the

ROUTES OF THE BELLE URBAN SYSTEM AND CONNECTING TRANSIT SERVICES: 2009



Source: SEWRPC.

adult cash fare increased from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per trip. Despite this, ridership increased from 1.1 million to 1.2 million revenue passengers, or about 10 percent.

The total annual expenditures for BUS transit system operations and capital projects average about \$8.77 million. Of this amount, operating revenue (mostly fares) covers an average of \$1.22 million. The remaining \$7.55 million in annual average expenditures is funded through Federal and state transit-assistance programs and local property taxes, of which the City of Racine provides about \$1.41 million.

Racine County Human Services Department

Racine County contracts with private, for-profit companies to provide door-to-door transportation to transportation handicapped persons within Racine County outside the service area for the City's DART paratransit service. The County also contracts with the Goodwill Industries and the Racine County Opportunity Center to provide subscription transportation for developmentally disabled individuals participating in training and employment programs.

Other Public Transit Services

Other transit services for the general public which operate in Racine County include:

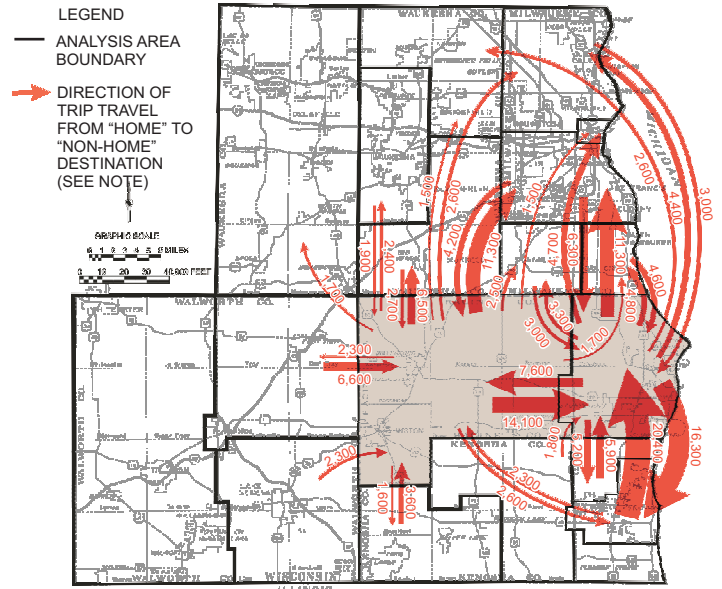
- A commuter-oriented express bus operated by Wisconsin Coach Lines, Inc./Coach USA between downtown Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha.
- Intercity bus routes operated by Coach USA between Milwaukee and Chicago, with a stop at IH 94 and STH 20.
- Intercity passenger train operated by Amtrak between Milwaukee and Chicago, with a stop in the Village of Sturtevant.

LAND USE AND TRAVEL PATTERNS

Commission staff gathered information on historic and current population, employment, land use, and travel patterns in Racine County. Key findings include:

- East of IH 94, the City of Racine has the highest concentrations of population, transit-dependent groups, and major shopping, education, medical, and government centers. West of IH 94, these concentrations are mostly found in the Burlington, Waterford-Rochester, and Union Grove areas.
- The highest employment concentrations are in the City of Racine; however, most of the increase in employment in the County since 1970 has occurred outside the City, along Washington Avenue (STH 20) and Durand Avenue (STH 11) in Mt. Pleasant and Sturtevant, as well as in Burlington.

DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE WEEKDAY PERSON TRIPS BETWEEN RACINE COUNTY AND SURROUNDING AREAS: 2001



NOTE: TRIPS ARE DISPLAYED BY THE NUMBER OF TRIPS MADE BY RESIDENTS OF EACH ANALYSIS AREA LEAVING FROM AND RETURNING TO THE ANALYSIS AREA. FOR EXAMPLE, A CITY OF RACINE RESIDENT COMMUTING FROM EASTERN RACINE COUNTY TO THE CITY OF KENOSHA FOR WORK AND RETURNING HOME AFTER WORK IS COUNTED TWICE IN THE ARROW FROM EASTERN RACINE COUNTY TO THE CITY OF KENOSHA. TOTAL TRAVEL BETWEEN ANALYSIS AREAS LESS THAN 1,500 TRIPS PER DAY IS NOT SHOWN.

APPROXIMATELY 400,400 TRIPS PER DAY AND 66,100 TRIPS PER DAY WERE MADE ENTIRELY WITHIN THE EASTERN AND WESTERN PORTIONS OF RACINE COUNTY, RESPECTIVELY.

Source: SEWRPC.

- Travel surveys conducted by the Commission indicate that between 1991 and 2001, average weekday total person travel between the County and areas outside the County increased by 32,900 trips, or about 22 percent. Map 2 shows the pattern and distribution of these trips.

EVALUATION OF TRANSIT SYSTEM AND IDENTIFICATION OF UNMET NEEDS

The study includes a detailed evaluation of the existing City of Racine BUS service using the performance measures identified in the transit system objectives and standards (see box), as well as an identification of unmet transit travel needs in both the eastern and western parts of the County.

Racine BUS Evaluation Findings

On a systemwide basis, the BUS provides good-to-excellent coverage of concentrations of population, employment, and activity centers east of IH 94.

The BUS system is about average when compared to "peer" transit systems in Wisconsin and nationally with respect to ridership, service levels, and operating costs. In general, the BUS provides a lot of service for the size of its service population, resulting in higher service effectiveness, but lower service efficiency.

The route-by-route evaluation identified Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 as the best-performing routes in the system. Routes 5, 20, 27, and 86 are the worst-performing routes in the system, and have many segments with low passenger activity. Routing and service changes to these routes should be explored.

The evaluation also found that 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.

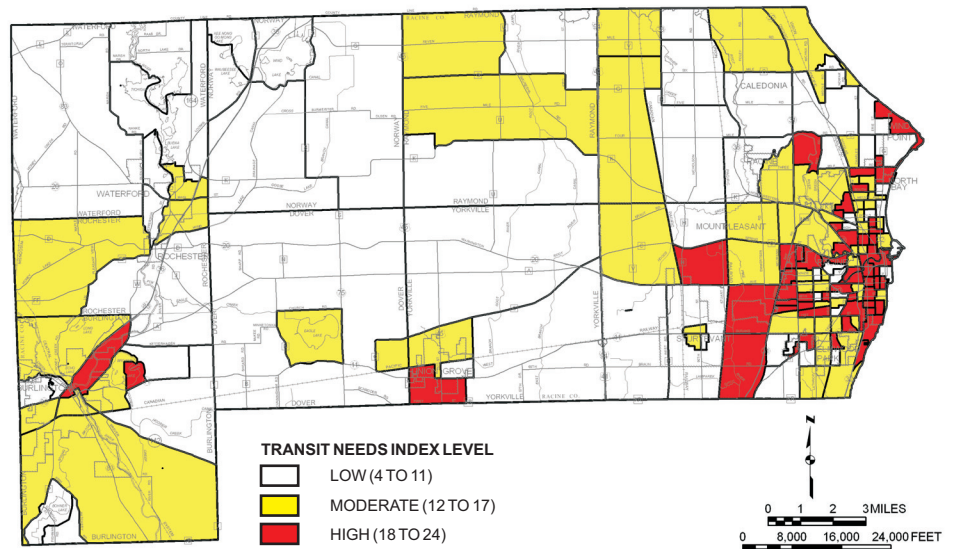
Transit Needs Index

Commission staff developed a transit needs index to identify the areas of greatest potential transit needs in Racine County, using U.S. Census block group population data. The map on this page graphically displays the resulting transit need levels in terms of high, moderate, and low transit needs throughout the County. There are high transit needs throughout the City of Racine and parts of Mt. Pleasant and Sturtevant. West of IH 94, Union Grove and Burlington also have areas with high transit needs.

Summary of Unmet Transit Travel Needs

The following unmet transit travel needs for Racine County residents are derived from the BUS perfor-

TRANSIT NEEDS INDEX FOR RACINE COUNTY: 2000



NOTE: THE TRANSIT NEEDS INDEX IS CALCULATED BY RANKING CENSUS BLOCK GROUPS BASED ON THE PERCENT OF POPULATION OR HOUSEHOLDS IN FOUR CATEGORIES: ELDERLY PERSONS, PERSONS IN LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, DISABLED PERSONS, AND HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO VEHICLE AVAILABLE. EACH RANKED BLOCK GROUP IS ASSIGNED A SCORE FROM 1 TO 6, IN EACH CATEGORY, WITH A 1 FOR THE LOWEST PERCENTAGES AND A 6 FOR THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGES. THE TRANSIT NEED INDEX IS EQUAL TO THE SUM OF THE SCORES FOR ALL FOUR CATEGORIES.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census and SEWRPC.

mance evaluation; from facilitated discussions with human services agencies, employers, and BUS users; and from the 2008 Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan for Racine County.

Eastern Racine County

- A need to improve BUS service to some areas in Sturtevant and Mt. Pleasant by extending routes or increasing service frequency;
- A need to connect transit services in Kenosha County, possibly via UW-Parkside and/or via Green Bay Road (STH 31).
- A need to add BUS service on holidays, and to extend BUS service hours on weekends;
- A need for more bus shelters;
- A taxi service in the City of Racine with reasonable response times;

Western Racine County

- Affordable, wheelchair accessible service, without eligibility restrictions, such as subsidized taxi and/or shuttle routes, especially in the Burlington-Rochester-Wind Lake area.
- Service for work and medical trips to and from adjacent counties, including Milwaukee, Kenosha, Walworth, and Waukesha Counties.
- A need to consider work-related transportation services that, although currently not in demand due to the weak economy, may be needed by the end of the five-year planning period.

PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

The following transit service objectives provide a basis for measuring the performance of the transit system, 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 public transit system should be economical and efficient, meeting all other objectives at the lowest possible cost.

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

If you are unable to attend one of the meetings, you can 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 November 20, 2009.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Website: www.sewrpc.org/racinetransitplan

E-mail: racinetransitplan@sewrpc.org

Fax: (262) 547-1103

Mail: P.O. Box 1607, Waukesha, WI 53187

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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, October 27, 2009, 4:30-6:30 pm

Racine Railroad Depot
1409 State Street, Racine

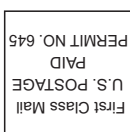
Wednesday, October 28, 2009, 4:30-6:30 pm

Burlington Town Hall
32288 Bushnell Road, Burlington

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 5:00-7:00 pm

Ives Grove Office Complex
14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant

All meeting locations are handicapped-accessible. Persons with special needs are asked to contact the SEWRPC office at (262) 547-6721 a minimum of 72 hours 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.



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