

Preliminary Draft

SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 281

KENOSHA COUNTY TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN: 2010-2014

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the City and County of Kenosha, the Regional Planning Commission has prepared this new short-range transit development plan for Kenosha County with recommendations covering the years 2010-2014. The Commission has routinely prepared short-range transit system development plans for the City of Kenosha and surrounding area east of IH-94. The last short-range plan prepared for the City of Kenosha outlined recommendations for the period 1998-2002 for improving and expanding local transit service in the Kenosha area, as well as improving express and rapid transit service connections between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee and between Kenosha and Lake County, Illinois.¹ In September 2007 Kenosha County began operating Western Kenosha County Transit, a rural fixed-route service that currently connects the communities in western Kenosha County with the City of Kenosha, the City of Lake Geneva in Walworth County, and the Village of Antioch in northern Illinois. The City and County requested that this study provide a full review of both the City-operated Kenosha Area Transit system, including some of the new service improvements recommended in the previous plan, and the County-operated Western Kenosha County Transit system.

This document provides an in-depth evaluation of the existing operations of the Kenosha Area Transit and Western Kenosha County Transit systems. It identifies unmet transit travel needs for Kenosha County residents, and includes recommendations for transit service and capital improvements for both the City and County transit systems. The preparation of the transit development plan included:

- Analysis of the transportation needs attendant to the existing land use patterns within Kenosha County, with particular attention given to areas with concentrations of employment and associated needs for work

¹ See *SEWRPC Community Assistance Planning Report No. 231, Kenosha Area Transit System Development Plan: 1998-2002, April 1998.*

commuting, and areas with concentrations of facilities serving the County's elderly, disabled, and low-income populations;

- Analyses of the travel habits, patterns, and needs of Kenosha County residents, particularly the transit-dependent population;
- A thorough evaluation of the performance of the existing transit systems operated by the City and County of Kenosha;
- An evaluation of the extent to which the existing transit systems operated by the City and County enable transfers to other transit services for travel within Kenosha County and between Kenosha and Racine Counties and Lake County, Illinois; and
- A careful evaluation of alternative courses of action for providing new or improved transit services along with their estimated costs.

The transit service improvements that are recommended under this new transit development 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 Kenosha County.

STUDY AREA

This report will focus on the public transit services and needs within Kenosha County. The study will also consider the need to provide transit services between Kenosha County and major activity centers in Racine County, Walworth County, and Lake County, Illinois.

STUDY PURPOSE

This transit development plan is intended to serve the following purposes:

1. To evaluate the performance of the Kenosha Area Transit and Western Kenosha County Transit systems, including the effectiveness of the existing route structure and schedules, and the financial performance of both systems and their component routes, so as to identify areas of effective and efficient transit service operation, along with areas of ineffective or inefficient operation;

2. To identify those transit service needs of Kenosha County residents which are not being met, or not being met well, by the existing transit systems, including travel which cannot be made on the existing systems within reasonable travel times, or cannot be made on the systems at all;
3. To design and evaluate alternative transit service improvements that address the service problems and deficiencies identified in the performance evaluation and the unmet transit service needs. The potential improvements considered included:
 - Modifying or eliminating route segments, or routes, identified as experiencing very poor performance in the performance evaluations of the City and County transit systems;
 - Adjusting the alignments of existing Kenosha Area Transit and Western Kenosha County Transit routes and the location of transfer points as appropriate, 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 systems;
 - Extending Kenosha Area Transit bus service to unserved residential areas and commercial and employment centers that have been developed in the City of Kenosha area since completion of the previous short-range plan for the City-operated transit system in 1998;
 - Further development and expansion of the Kenosha Area Transit Electric Streetcar to make it a more integral and expanded part of the Kenosha Area Transit system;
 - Potential future regional transit services provided by the County, City, or another entity for persons traveling between Kenosha County and adjacent counties in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois;
 - Potential modifications to the operations of the Western Kenosha County Transit system to improve service effectiveness and efficiency;
 - Adjusting the existing systems' routes and schedules to increase connectivity between Kenosha Area Transit and Western Kenosha County Transit, as well as with other existing public transit services in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, and potential future commuter rail service between Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties;
 - Consideration of an initial implementation stage of the transit recommendations for Kenosha County presented in the Commission's year 2035 adopted regional transportation system plan;

4. To prepare a planning document that would serve as a guide for County and City officials for implementing transit recommendations over a five-year period; and
5. 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 new Kenosha County transit development plan involved the following eight steps:

1. Study organization, including the appointment by the City and County of an advisory committee to guide the study effort;
2. The formulation of appropriate transit service development objectives and supporting performance standards;
3. The collection of the socioeconomic, land use, and travel pattern data pertinent to the design and evaluation of transit services;
4. The analysis of the operation of the existing City and County transit systems, including the identification of any potential deficiencies and unmet needs for transit service within Kenosha County and between Kenosha and Racine Counties and Lake County, Illinois;
5. The design of alternative transit system improvements that could address the deficiencies and unmet transit service needs;
6. The evaluation of the proposed alternative transit system improvements;
7. The selection and documentation of a recommended plan; and
8. The identification of the actions to be taken by the City of Kenosha, Kenosha 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 development plan was a joint effort by the staffs of Kenosha County, the City of Kenosha, 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, an advisory committee was appointed by the City of Kenosha Mayor and the Kenosha County Executive. The full membership of the Kenosha County Transit Planning Advisory Committee is listed inside of the front cover of this report. *[A copy of the Advisory Committee roster is attached to 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 Systems,” which describes the current transit systems serving the City of Kenosha and Kenosha County, along with other major public transit services also serving the County.
- Chapter III, “Land Use and Travel Patterns,” which describes Kenosha County’s current land use, demographic, and economic characteristics, along with existing travel habits and patterns.
- 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 the Existing Transit Systems and Identification of Unmet Needs,” which describes how well the existing City and County transit systems meet the objectives and standards, thereby identifying service-related problems and deficiencies and unmet transit service needs.
- Chapter VI, “Alternative and Recommended Transit Service Improvements,” which provides a description of the transit system improvements for 2010 through 2014 that have been considered and recommended by the Advisory Committee.
- Chapter VII, “Summary and Conclusions,” which provides a brief overview of the significant findings and recommendations of the study.

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