Minutes of the Third Meeting

THE RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN WORKGROUP: 2012-2016

Date: July 30, 2009

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Racine County Ives Grove Auditorium
14200 Washington Avenue
Sturtevant, WI 53177

Workgroup Members Present
Julie Anderson ..................................... Director, Racine County Department of Planning & Development
Raymond DeHahn ................................. Member, City of Racine Transit and Parking Commission
Thomas Friedel ..................................... City Administrator, City of Racine
Deborah Ganaway ................................. Chair, City of Racine Transit and Parking Commission
Curtis Garner ...................................... Executive Director, Belle Urban System
Raymond Gromacki .............................. Chair, Town of Dover
Nancy Holmlund ................................. President, WISDOM
Richard Jones .................................. Commissioner of Public Works/City Engineer, City of Racine
Deborah Jossart ................................. Director, Racine County Human Services
Dave Lowe ....................................... Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Terrance McMahon ............................. Supervisor, Town of Yorkville
Robert Miller ................................. Mayor, City of Burlington
John Nordbo .................................... Bureau of Planning and Economic Development, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Brian O’Connell ................................. Director of City Development, City of Racine
Karen Olufs .................................. Director, Independent Living, Society’s Assets, Inc
Christopher Reuwer ........................... Racine County Mobility Manager
Karen Schmiechen ............................. Urban Planning Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Patrick Starken ................................. Transportation Director, Racine Unified School District

Guests and Staff Present
Stephan Adams ................................. Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Albert A. Beck ................................. Principal Planner, SEWRPC
Jason Biernat .................................... Research Aide, SEWRPC
Sonia Dubielzig ................................ Senior Planner, SEWRPC
Michael Moore ................................... Racine Journal Times
Jacob Walton ................................. Research Aide, SEWRPC
Kenneth R. Yunker ............................. Executive Director, SEWRPC
Roll Call

Ms. Anderson brought the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m., introduced herself, and asked those present to introduce themselves. She indicated that roll call would be taken through the circulation of a meeting sign-in sheet.

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 19, 2009, MEETING

Ms. Dubielzig introduced the minutes and discussed the Racine County Employer Transportation Survey, the analysis of which was included as an attachment to the previous meeting’s minutes. Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the previous meeting’s minutes. Mr. O’Connell seconded the motion, and the Workgroup unanimously approved the minutes.


Ms. Dubielzig reviewed with the Workgroup the fifth chapter of the Racine County Public Transit Plan on a section-by-section basis. During the review, the following questions were raised and addressed:

1. Referring to the systemwide performance evaluation on page 2, Mr. Starken noted that the discussion of the characteristics of peer systems did not indicate whether the peer transit systems carried significant levels of students for local school districts. He noted that approximately 1,500 students were eligible for passes issued by the School District for use on Belle Urban System (BUS) routes. He believed there was a good opportunity to increase this number which could be favorable to both the school district and the transit system. Mr. DeHahn agreed with Mr. Starken and stated that increasing the number of students using the BUS may result in a need to increase service to provide for thirty minute peak period headways as well as a need for additional buses.

Mr. O’Connell asked if school ridership was included in the October 2006 automatic passenger counts that were the basis for the evaluation of the transit system. Mr. Starken said that school ridership was included but had greatly increased since 2006. Mr. Garner added that the school ridership in 2006 was approximately 500 trips per school day. Mr. DeHahn asked if a comparison of Kindergarten through 12th grade ridership for the Racine and Madison transit systems could be included in that discussion in Chapter V. Mr. Yunker said that the comparison would be included in Chapter V along with a discussion addressing recent and potential future increases in student ridership. He asked Mr. Garner whether an increase in the number of student riders would generate the need for more buses. Mr. Garner said it was possible that it could.

[Secretary’s Note: Total transit system ridership on Madison Metro Transit in 2008 was estimated at about 53,000 to 55,000 trips on an average weekday. A 2008 on-bus survey on the system found that approximately 6 percent of the weekday transit trips, or between 3,200 and 3,300 trips, were made by K-12 students. Because Madison Metro Transit is significantly larger than the BUS, Commission staff also collected information on the ridership by secondary school students on the Wisconsin peer transit systems. For the Wisconsin peer group, trips by K-12 students represented a range between 8 percent (La Crosse) and 66 percent (Kenosha) of average weekday transit ridership.]
The following paragraph was added at the end of paragraph “3” on pages 5 and 6 of Chapter V:

“One potential area where it may be possible for the BUS to achieve ridership gains is by having more elementary and secondary school (K-12) students use the transit system. Table 5-4A presents information showing the proportion of average weekday passengers on the Wisconsin peer transit systems that are K-12 school students. The proportion of weekday ridership attributable to students ranged from about 8 percent on the La Crosse transit system to about 66 percent on the Kenosha transit system, with an average of about 29 percent for all six peer systems. Student ridership on the BUS was about the peer average but could potentially be increased by working with the Racine Unified School District to increase the number of students it places on the BUS.”

Table 5-4A is included in Attachment 1.

2. Ms. Dubielzig stated that Route No. 30 was not included in the analysis due to it being a limited service route intended to serve students. Mr. Lowe commented that student-oriented routes such as Route No. 30 were required to be open for use by the general public. Ms. Dubielzig said that staff would amend the chapter to include evaluation of Route No. 30.

[Secretary’s Note: Table 5-5 and Figures 5-1 and 5-2 were revised to include performance measures for Route No. 30 and are included in Attachment 2. The first bulleted paragraph on page 8 of the chapter was modified to read as follows:

“Route Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 30 have weekday performance levels for all measures that consistently exceed the minimum (or maximum) acceptable level. Of these six routes, Route Nos. 3, 4, and 7 are clearly the best performers; they rank in the top three for nearly all the service effectiveness and cost effectiveness measures. The remaining three, Route Nos. 1, 2, and 30 have weekday performance measures that are generally above average. Based solely upon these measures, these routes could continue to be operated without change.”

The automatic passenger count for Route No. 30 did not include boardings and alightings on a detailed stop basis, so the section of the chapter dealing with productive and unproductive segments was not changed.]

3. Referring to Tables 5-5 through 5-7, Mr. O’Connell observed that Route No. 86 serves St. Mary’s Hospital, but had low performance levels. Ms. Dubielzig and Mr. Beck pointed out that even though the route performed poorly overall, the route segment serving St. Mary’s Hospital had high ridership. Mr. Yunker stated that the purpose of the route evaluation was to identify concerns by comparing routes. He noted that a poor performing route may not result in a need to eliminate the route.

4. Ms. Dubielzig noted that the schedule adherence evaluation had not been completed, and that it would be included as an attachment to the meeting minutes (see Attachment 3).

5. Referring to the identification of unmet transit service needs for areas not currently served by transit on page 15, Mr. DeHahn asked whether any transit services would be proposed for western Racine County. Ms. Dubielzig stated the next step in analyzing unmet needs would include looking at alternative transit options for western Racine County. She also noted that
one possible system may be a dial-a-ride system which would be discussed in focus groups. Mr. Yunker added that vanpools and other ride-sharing options would be addressed as well. He also stated that staff hoped to gather feedback concerning the possible alternative transit service improvements from the focus groups. Possible alternatives and focus group comments/suggestions would be presented to the Workgroup at the next meeting.

6. Ms. Dubielzig stated that unmet needs for transit service connecting Racine County with adjacent counties had not been completed, and that it would be included as an attachment to the meeting minutes (see Attachment 4).

7. Ms. Holmlund stated that Governor Doyle had indicated a desire for regional cooperation for public transit in Southeastern Wisconsin. She said that the study should identify the unmet needs for regional transit in order to be ready to address those needs if and when a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) is created with authorization to fund regional transit service. Some discussion on RTAs followed, mainly around some of the problems that an RTA would be able to address, such as transit service between the City of Racine and UW-Parkside and the problem of how to fund transit service extensions outside the City of Racine. Mr. Garner asked whether the plan would include potential changes for the BUS if KRM commuter rail was implemented. Mr. Yunker stated that the plan could include some analysis on how to adapt the BUS system for KRM, but that it should not become the main focus of the plan.

8. Mr. Yunker said the Commission staff would change the text under paragraph “2” on page 21 to more accurately represent the analysis derived from the performance evaluation.

[Secretary’s Note: The last two sentences of that paragraph have been changed to read, “In general, the BUS provides a high level of service for its service area population size, resulting in higher service effectiveness, but somewhat lower service efficiency”.

CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS AND PROPOSAL FOR FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

Ms. Dubielzig asked the Workgroup to consider a proposal to meet with focus groups to develop an assessment of unmet needs for areas not currently served by transit. Workgroup members had the following questions and comments regarding the proposal:

1. Mr. Garner stated a new company, Express Transportation of Wisconsin, was providing human services transportation in the County. He suggested that Express Transportation of Wisconsin be added to the focus group list and provided the company’s contact information.

2. Ms. Jossart suggested that representatives from the Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce and the Workforce Development Board be included in the focus groups. She suggested that Commission staff contact the Workforce Development Board to include the focus group discussion on the agenda of one of their regularly scheduled meetings. She also stated that the focus groups should include all transportation providers. Mr. Lowe suggested that the Racine County Mobility Manager, Mr. Reuwer, be part of each focus group.

3. Ms. Dubielzig stated that there would be three or more public meetings with tentative locations in Racine, Burlington, and Sturtevant. Mr. Reuwer suggested that the focus groups be held before the public meetings. Ms. Jossart also suggested that the public meeting times and locations would be set and presented at the focus group meetings. Mr. Yunker asked Ms.
Ms. Dubielzig if she had a preliminary timeline set for the focus groups and public meetings. Ms. Dubielzig stated that the focus groups would likely be held in mid-October with the public meetings following in early November.

4. Ms. Dubielzig stated that a summary of the public comments from the focus groups and public meetings would be incorporated into Chapter V and would be included as an attachment to the meeting minutes (see Attachment 5).

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve Chapter V with the changes discussed during the meeting, Ms. Jossart seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved by the Workgroup.

NEXT MEETING OF THE RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN WORKGROUP

Ms. Dubielzig previewed the topics of the next Workgroup meeting. She stated that the next meeting would present and discuss the unmet needs and other concerns identified during the focus groups and public meetings, and discuss alternative short-range transit plans.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth R. Yunker
Recording Secretary
### Table 5-4A

**STUDENT RIDERSHIP ON WISCONSIN PEER TRANSIT SYSTEMS**  
**FOR THE BELLE URBAN SYSTEM: 2009 ESTIMATED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transit System</th>
<th>Average Weekday Boarding Passengers</th>
<th>Estimated Weekday Student Passenger Trips&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appleton Valley Transit</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eau Claire Transit System</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Bay Metro</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenosha Transit System</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>3,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheboygan Transit System</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racine Belle Urban System</td>
<td>4,900</td>
<td>1,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Represents estimated passenger trips made by elementary and secondary school (K-12) students as provided in a telephone survey of the peer transit systems or as taken from published reports.

*Source: SEWRPC.*
Table 5-5 Revised

AVERAGE WEEKDAY PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE REGULAR ROUTES OF THE BELLE URBAN SYSTEM: OCTOBER 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bus Route</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Hours</th>
<th>Revenue Vehicle Miles</th>
<th>Total Passengers</th>
<th>Service Effectiveness Measures</th>
<th>Cost Effectiveness Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operating Cost (^a)</td>
<td>Operating Assistance (^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Operating Cost per Passenger</td>
<td>Operating Assistance per Passenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>1,080</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Total/Average</td>
<td>278.4</td>
<td>3,673</td>
<td>5,440</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum/Maximum Acceptable Level</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>435(^b)</td>
<td>15.6(^b)</td>
<td>1.2(^b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Operating cost and operating assistance values are estimated based on the revenue vehicle miles of each week, the average systemwide cost per revenue vehicle mile, and the total daily boarding passengers per route.

\(^b\)The minimum acceptable performance level for the ridership, service effectiveness and farebox recovery measures is 20 percent below the overall average for all routes. Red text in these measures indicates that a route performs below the minimum acceptable level for that particular measure and should be considered a poor performer as specified under Objective 2, service performance standard 2.

\(^c\)The maximum acceptable performance level for cost effectiveness measures is 20 percent above the overall average for all routes. Red text in these measures indicates that a route performs worse than the maximum acceptable level for that particular measure, and should be considered a poor performer as specified under Objective 3, service performance standard 3.

Source: City of Racine Department of Transportation and SEWRPC.
Revised Figure 5-1
RIDERSHIP AND SERVICE EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES FOR THE ROUTES OF THE BELLE URBAN SYSTEM: OCTOBER 2006

TOTAL PASSENGERS

TOTAL PASSENGERS PER REVENUE VEHICLE HOUR

TOTAL PASSENGERS PER REVENUE VEHICLE MILE

LEGEND: WEEKDAYS SATURDAYS SUNDAYS

Source: SEWRPC and City of Racine Department of Transportation.
Revised Figure 5-2
COST EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES FOR THE ROUTES OF THE BELLE URBAN SYSTEM: OCTOBER 2006

OPERATING COST PER PASSENGER

OPERATING ASSISTANCE PER PASSENGER

FAREBOX RECOVERY RATE

LEGEND:  WEEKDAYS  SATURDAYS  SUNDAYS

Source: SEWRPC and City of Racine Department of Transportation.
Text inserted on page 11 of Chapter V under the heading Schedule Adherence:

“Excessive waiting times caused by buses running behind schedule or resulting from missed connections due to early bus departures can detract from, and even be a deterrent to, using the transit system. The provision of reliable and on-time transit service is, therefore, extremely important in attracting and retaining transit riders. The transit service standards for this study define “on time” as adherence to published schedules within the range of one minute early and three minutes late.

The Belle Urban System monitors schedule adherence on its bus routes through an automatic vehicle location (AVL) system which tracks the location of each bus used in daily service throughout the day. The transit system monitors the bus stop arrival and departure times of the vehicles operating over each route and can compare those times to scheduled times at time points along the route.

For the systemwide performance evaluation, schedule adherence data were collected for the week of April 20-24, 2009. The on-time performance data collected by the transit system indicated that the transit system meets the service standard of 90 percent of the service being on-time. Every route was at or above this level except Route No. 7, which was only 80 percent on-time due to a large number of early departures from bus stops. Further investigation should be done to determine the cause of the early departures on Route No. 7.”

* * *

* * *
Text to be inserted on page 19 under the heading, “Unmet Needs For Transit Service Connecting Racine County with Adjacent Counties”:

1. **Travel between Racine and Kenosha Counties.** Since 2006, when the City of Racine eliminated bus service to the UW-Parkside campus, the only transit service between the Cities of Kenosha and Racine has been provided by Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines, which operates eight trips in each direction on weekdays and six trips in each direction on weekends and holidays between Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee. This service has several drawbacks for use as local transit service: first, the system requires passengers traveling between Kenosha Area Transit (KAT) and BUS routes to transfer at the central transfer terminals of the two cities. The BUS central transfer station is located about a mile from the main area of commercial development in the Racine central business district, making it somewhat inconvenient for some travelers from Kenosha to get to locations in downtown Racine, such as Gateway Technical College. Second, the BUS, unlike KAT, does not have a transfer agreement with Wisconsin Coach Lines, so passengers must pay the full fare when transferring between a BUS route and the Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines route. Third, the service was largely designed for commuter trips to/from downtown Milwaukee and, therefore, does not have the frequency of service that is needed to make it convenient for travel between Racine and Kenosha. Participants in the Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan Meetings in 2008 also identified the need to improve transit service between Racine and Kenosha, noting that students or staff needing to travel to the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, Gateway Technical College, or Carthage College in Kenosha County either could not make the trip by public transit, or could not do so without multiple transfers, long wait times, and paying high fares.
To investigate the level of demand for restoring some sort of service that would provide improved transit service between the two cities, Commission staff reviewed the average weekday travel survey data for the year 2001 displayed on Maps 3-11 and 3-12 of Chapter III of this report. About 47,800 person trips were made on an average weekday in 2001 between eastern Racine County and eastern Kenosha County. Of those trips, about 17,500 were made between the primary transit service areas of Racine and Kenosha transit systems.

Commission staff also conducted an analysis to determine potential demand for restoring transit service from the City of Racine to the UW-Parkside campus. For the 2010-2011 school year, UW-Parkside had about 5,300 enrolled students and about 700 employees. Of those students, about 1,000 (19 percent) lived on campus. The UW-Parkside registrar’s office provided data listing the number of employees and students’ permanent residences by zip code. Map 5-9 graphically displays the distribution of residences for UW-Parkside employees and students. The university was not able to provide information on whether any of these students lived on campus, or had different addresses while classes were in session. As the map shows, most students and employees reside in eastern Kenosha and Racine Counties. About 1,600 students and employees have permanent residences in the KAT service area in the City of Kenosha while about 1,500 students and employees have permanent residences in the BUS transit service area in the City of Racine. The nearly-equal distribution of students and employees between the two cities indicates that sufficient ridership may be generated by a route serving UW-Parkside from both the Cities of Racine and Kenosha.

The preceding analyses suggest that there is an unmet transit service need for frequent and convenient transit service connecting the City of Racine and the City of Kenosha along a corridor
PERMANENT RESIDENCES OF UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-PARKSIDE STUDENTS AND EMPLOYEES COMPARED TO PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICE AREAS IN RACINE COUNTY AND ADJACENT COUNTIES: FALL 2010 HEADCOUNT

Source: University of Wisconsin-Parkside and SEWRPC
west of STH 32 (in order to avoid duplicating the existing Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines service), with a stop at UW-Parkside.

2. **Travel between Racine and Milwaukee County.** Commission staff also conducted analyses to determine the extent of need for additional transit services between Racine County and Milwaukee County. Participants in the Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan meetings in 2008 believed that individuals commuting from western Racine County to Milwaukee County needed and would use park-ride facilities along STH 36, and might also make use of a commuter-oriented public transit service between Burlington and Milwaukee County. They also believed there was a need for a fast, attractive transit service connecting the City of Racine with major activity centers and employment centers in eastern Milwaukee County.

The Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines service is currently the only public transit service between Milwaukee and Racine Counties. The public and private transit services in Racine County and surrounding Counties are displayed on Map 5-10. The map also shows some of the major employers and major universities that could attract travel between Racine County and the adjacent Counties.

Commission staff used the U.S. Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employment and Household Demographics (LEHD) data on residence and job location for 2007 through 2009 to prepare Map 5-11. As the map shows, about 7,120 workers with residences in eastern Racine County commute to the City of Milwaukee, and about 5,960 commute to the City of Kenosha. The numbers of commuters between those Cities does support the idea that increased commuter public transportation services could be considered.
MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTERS COMPARED TO PUBLIC TRANSIT SERVICES IN RACINE COUNTY AND ADJACENT COUNTIES: 2010

ACTIVITY CENTERS
- Major employers with over 100 employees (Racine County) or 250 or more employee (all other counties)
- Major hospitals and colleges
- Major commercial areas

COUNTY BOUNDARIES

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Major employers

Major hospitals and colleges

Major commercial areas

Source: SEWRPC

Map 5-10
AREAS WITHIN RACINE COUNTY FOR WHICH PLACE OF WORK WAS IDENTIFIED FOR RESIDENTS

EAST
WHITEWATER
DELAVAN
DARIEN
SHARON
FONTANA ON GENEVA LAKE
WALWORTH
WILLIAMS BAY
LAKE GENEVA
GENOA CITY
ELKHORN
TROY

Richmond Sugar Creek Lafayette Spring Prairie
Lyons Delavan Darien Sharon Walworth Linn

KENOSHA CO.
PLEASANT PRAIRIE
PADDOCK LAKE
SILVER LAKE
TWIN LAKES
Dover
WISCONSIN ILLINOIS

WALWORTH CO.
WALWORTH CO.
MENOMONEE FALLS
BUTLER
ELM GROVE
NEW BERLIN
MUSKOGO
BIG BEND
MUKWONAGO
NORTH PRAIRIE
EAGLE
CHENEQUA
NASHOTAH
DELAFIELD
Oconomowoc
LAC LA BELLE
DELAVIAN
LAKE OWASSO
DELAVIAN
LAKE

NOTE: MUNICIPALITIES OUTSIDE RACINE COUNTY THAT HAVE LESS THAN 300 RACINE COUNTY RESIDENTS COMMUTING TO WORK ARE NOT SHOWN

Source: U.S. Census Bureau and SEWRPC.
The LEHD data show that about 2,010 workers with residences in western Racine County commute to the City of Milwaukee. Based on estimates that about 1.2 percent of commuter trips from rural areas to an urban area could be made by transit\(^1\), transit service between western Racine County and Milwaukee would generate about 24 commuters daily. Based on these results, it is not clear whether there would be sufficient demand for a fixed-route commuter service between communities in western Racine County and central Milwaukee County at this time.

From September to November of 2009, Commission staff solicited public feedback on the transit plan via three methods. First, staff conducted three “discussion groups” on the unmet needs for transit with representatives from workforce development and private businesses; human services agencies; and transit users, respectively. Second, staff distributed information about plan and the study findings through a widely distributed newsletter and provided opportunity for the public to comment through the website and via e-mail and letter during a public comment period. Third, Commission and County staff held three public informational meetings in the City of Racine, City of Burlington, and Village of Sturtevant.

The following sections summarize the comments made regarding transit service concerns at the three discussion groups and during the public comment period and the public informational meetings. Only the concerns that had three or more comments are listed below. The Record of Public Comments: Racine County Public Transit Plan: 2012-2016, has a full record of all the public comments received, was provided to each member of the study Workgroup, and is available on the Commission website.

In general, the comments were supportive of transit. The discussion groups agreed that providing public transit was necessary for getting people to jobs and services. A total of seven comments submitted during the public comment period and at public informational meetings expressed support for transit and the transit plan, while two comments from individuals located outside the BUS service area expressed opposition to transit.

Comments about Transit Service Needs in Eastern Racine County

The public comments compliment the findings of the performance evaluation of the BUS presented previously in this Chapter:

- **BUS Routes, Schedules, and Hours.** Participants in the discussion groups believed that the current midday schedule of the BUS is confusing. Between 9:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., the bus routes alternate between 30- and 60-minute headways. The discussion group participants also agreed that the alignments of some should be modified to reflect land use changes. Specifically, the alignments of Route Nos. 20 and 27 (serving the Sturtevant and Mount Pleasant area), and
Route No. 86 (which is a loop) make travel to destinations on those routes inconvenient. Three public comments made during the public comment period expressed a desire for more frequent service on the system.

- **Service to Suburbs around the City of Racine.** The discussion groups had mixed reactions to the idea of additional service to the communities around the City of Racine. The transit users believed that there was a need to improve the bus service between the City and the locations in Sturtevant and Mount Pleasant. The workforce development and private businesses discussion group agreed there was a need for more service, but questioned whether businesses and communities outside the City would cooperate financially. Six public comments made during the public comment period expressed support for maintaining and expanding service to the suburbs around Racine.

- **Bus shelters.** The transit users discussion group strongly emphasized the need for more bus shelters to protect riders from weather elements. Two public comments made during the public comment period also expressed a need for more bus shelters.

- **Private Taxi Service.** Both the workforce development and private businesses discussion group and the transit users discussion group strongly believed there is a need for a taxi service in the City of Racine that can respond to a request for service within an hour.

**Comments about Unmet Needs for Transit Services in Western Racine County**

- **Need for Affordable Rural Transportation.** The human services agencies discussion group noted that many of the current transportation services in western Racine County are either not available to people who do not meet certain eligibility requirements (such as age or disability), or are prohibitively expensive for people who have regular medical appointments, but do not qualify for Title 19 (Medicaid) transportation. They also noted that there is a need for a transportation service that can take last-minute “crisis” transportation requests that are not medical-related. Two public comments made during the public comment period also expressed support for dial-a-ride service in Racine County.

- **Need for Public Transportation in the Burlington Area.** The human services agencies discussion group believed that either a subsidized shared-ride taxi or a shuttle service could address many of
the unmet transportation needs in the western part of the County, especially if they were focused in the Burlington area.

Comments Regarding Needs for Transit Connections to Other Counties.

- **Service to UW-Parkside and the City of Kenosha.** The transit users discussion group believed there is a need to restore transit service from Racine to UW-Parkside and to the City of Kenosha. Four public comments made during the public comment period also expressed support for restoring service to UW-Parkside. Two public comments expressed general support for a transit service that would connect to the Kenosha Area Transit system.

- **Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Transit Service.** The transit users discussion group stated that the Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines route between the City of Kenosha and the City of Milwaukee would benefit from more frequent service. Two public comments made during the public comment period indicated a lack of awareness of the Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines route. Seven public comments made during the public comment period expressed support for a potential commuter rail line between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee (KRM).

- **Burlington to Milwaukee Commuter Service.** The workforce development and private businesses discussion group, as well as the human service agencies discussion group, believed that a commuter bus service from Burlington, Waterford, and Rochester along STH 36 to Milwaukee County may be successful. On the other hand, several people at the public informational meeting held in the Town of Burlington made oral comments to Commission staff in opposition to transit for western Racine County, because it would be an unnecessary increase in government spending.