Background

- Short-range, five-year plan for public transit in Racine County
  - Will include advisory recommendations for transit service for both the City and County through 2017
- Prepared by SEWRPC
  - Joint effort with City and County
- Guided by an Advisory Workgroup
Outline of Presentation

- Review of existing transit services
- Transit service improvement alternatives
  - City of Racine Alternative
  - Racine County Alternatives
  - Inter-County Alternatives
- Next Steps
Existing Transit Services

City of Racine Belle Urban System

- Eight regular bus routes and several peak-hour routes
- Dial-A-Ride Transport (DART)
  - Federally-mandated
  - For individuals with disabilities who cannot use the fixed-route service

Source: City of Racine Department of Transportation and SEWRPC.
Racine County Transportation Services

- Racine County Human Services Department provides two transportation services:
  - Demand-response transportation to seniors and disabled persons outside the DART service area, and to seniors within the DART service area.
  - Burlington area shuttle service through the Shuttling People Around Racine County (SPARC) program.

- Primary funding sources:
  - County funds
  - State Section 85.21 specialized transportation assistance funds
Existing Transit Services (continued)

Inter-County Transportation Services

- Milwaukee-Racine-Kenosha commuter bus route
  - Operated by Wisconsin Coach Lines (WCL).
- UW-Parkside campus shuttle
  - Two round-trips between campus and the City of Racine.
City of Racine Alternative

Preliminary Recommended Alternative for the Belle Urban System (BUS)

- Alternative system is “financially constrained”
  - Limits local contributions to $1.52 to $1.65 million per year during five-year period
- Would address several operational issues
  - Confusing midday schedule
  - Long layover times on evenings and weekends
  - Inconvenient travel on Route 86 one-way loop
  - Route updates needed to more efficiently serve development
City of Racine Alternative (continued)

- **Route changes**
  - Poor-performing routes would be combined and realigned.

- **Equal route lengths**
  - 30 minutes from the Transit Center to the route endpoint, then 30 minutes back to the Transit Center.

Source: City of Racine Department of Transportation and SEWRPC.
Alternative system would save about $340,000 in total operating costs in its first full year

Modest ridership increases are assumed (1% per year)

No additional capital investment required over existing system
Funding levels could change during the next five years.

Options are presented in case additional funding becomes available or funding levels decrease.

City has more flexibility under alternative system to change routes based on performance.
Three alternatives for transit service in Racine County were developed:

1. Expand/Coordinate Existing Services
2. Public Shared-Ride Taxi
3. Vanpools
Racine County Alternative 1

Alternative 1:
Expand/Coordinate Existing Services

- Sub-alternative 1A: West of IH 94, expand eligibility for County demand-response service
- Sub-alternative 1B: East of IH 94, combine the City DART paratransit and County demand response services
- Sub-alternative 1C: Continue/refine shuttle service and operate service as public transit
Summary of Conclusions

- Sub-alt. 1A (Expand eligibility to all clients of County Human Services):
  - More service needed, resulting in increased costs
  - Not eligible for Federal/State transit operating assistance

- Sub-alt. 1B (Combined City/County paratransit east of IH 94):
  - May not save money
  - Complex undertaking

- Sub-alt. 1C (Shuttles operated as transit open to general public):
  - Need to use vehicles accessible to persons with disabilities, which may increase operator’s unit costs
  - Eligible for Federal/State transit operating assistance, which would limit needed levels of County and 85.21 funding
Racine County Alternative 2

Alternative 2:

Public Shared-Ride Taxi West of IH 94

- Would replace eligibility-limited County demand-response service with shared-ride taxi program open to general public
- Would be provided using small vehicles
- Would be similar to programs in Ozaukee and Washington Counties
Summary of Conclusions

- A shared-ride taxi program would significantly increase operating costs
- Eligible for Federal and State rural transit operating funds
  - Reduces initial amount of State Section 85.21 and County funding needed
- Demand likely to increase beyond 2017
  - May eventually need much higher County funding
Racine County Alternative 3

Alternative 3: Vanpools for Commuter Trips

- Sub-alternative 3A: County-run vanpool program
  - Administered by County staff, with County purchasing vans

- Sub-alternative 3B: Privately-run vanpool program
  - Administered by private operator, which would provide vans
Summary of Conclusions

- Privately-run vanpool would not require investment from the County

- However, user fees would be significantly higher for a privately-run vanpool
  - To reduce user fees, the County could contribute funding, or partner with employers willing to contribute funding, to the privately-run program
Summary of Conclusions

- County may be able to adequately fund a number of alternatives
- For example, three initiatives could be implemented (while maintaining the existing eligibility-limited demand response service west of IH 94):
  - Sub-alt. 1B: Combine City/County paratransit east of IH 94
  - Sub-alt. 1C: Operate shuttle service as public transit
  - Alt. 3: Vanpools
- All three together would not likely require an increase in local and County funding
  - Potential to increase if demand increases significantly
Alternatives that would replace and expand the existing eligibility-limited demand-response service west of IH 94 would likely require an increase in funding:

- Sub-alternative 1A (expand eligibility to all clients of County Human Services) would require a significant increase in County funding by 2017
- Alternative 2 (shared-ride taxi program open to the general public) would not likely increase County funding by 2017, but could significantly increase County funding beyond 2017
Park-Ride Lot Needs

- Existing Ives Grove park-ride lot (Hwy 20 and IH 94) experiencing capacity problems
  - Lot reportedly exceeding capacity at times
  - BUS Route 20 has difficulty maneuvering in lot due to illegally parked cars when lot is over-capacity
  - City and County currently working with WisDOT to address capacity issues (possible expansion on adjacent County-owned land)
Inter-County Alternatives

- Four alternatives for transit service between Racine County and surrounding counties were developed:
  1. Increased Commuter Bus Frequency
  2. Local Public Transit to UW-Parkside
  3. Kenosha-Racine Express Bus
  4. Burlington-Milwaukee Commuter Bus
Alternative 1:

Increase Milwaukee-Racine-Kenosha Commuter Bus Service Frequency

- Increase weekday round-trips from 7 to 10
- Route change to directly serve Gateway Technical College in Racine
Summary of Conclusions

- Would need to significantly increase funding
- Whether or not service is increased, BUS and WCL should consider steps to integrate two services
  - Would promote coordination between commuter and local transit services, making them easier to use and more attractive
Alternative 2: Provide Improved Transit Service to UW-Parkside

- Sub-alternative 2A: BUS shuttle route
- Sub-alternative 2B: Extend proposed BUS Route 1
- Sub-alternative 2C: Extend and increase existing campus shuttle
Summary of Conclusions

- Connecting to southwest transfer point—under all three sub-alternatives—would provide access to more BUS routes
- Higher frequency service would provide better service to UW-Parkside and allow convenient transfers to Kenosha Area Transit routes
  - Extended BUS Route 1: 15.5 weekday round-trips
  - City shuttle: 6 weekday round-trips
  - University shuttle: 3 weekday round-trips
- Extended BUS Route 1 would require additional funding and may cause operational issues
  - Route would be longer than all other BUS routes
- Improving service to UW-Parkside would require City and University to collaborate on operations and funding
Alternative 3:

Establish Express Bus Service Between Racine and Kenosha

- Would be jointly established by Cities of Racine and Kenosha
- Would serve colleges and universities
- 16 weekday round-trips
Summary of Conclusions

- Would be eligible for Federal and State urban transit operating funds
  - Cities would provide local matching funds
- Annual operating expenses in 2017 would be about $800,000
  - Local funds of about $260,000 (assuming City of Racine provides half, this represents an increase in City funding of over 10 percent)
- Four buses would need to be purchased
  - Federal capital grants could fund 80 percent
Alternative 4: Establish Commuter Bus Service Between Burlington and Milwaukee

- Would be established by Racine County
- Two weekday round-trips
- Would serve three park-ride lots
Summary of Conclusions

- Would be eligible for Federal and State rural transit operating funds
  - County would provide local matching funds
- Annual operating expenses in 2017 would be about $230,000
  - Local funds of about $39,000
- Could also obtain FHWA CMAQ funding
  - Could fund 80 percent of operating expenses for first three years
Next Steps

- Obtain public input on alternatives
  - Comments accepted through March 15, 2013

- Prepare final recommended plan
  - Recommended transit service improvements for Racine County over next five years

- Present final plan to City and County for their consideration