

Appendix C

SUMMARY OF MOST RECENT PROPOSAL FOR A COMMUTER RAIL LINE BETWEEN KENOSHA, RACINE, AND MILWAUKEE

Introduction and Background

There have been a number of studies prepared on possible major transportation improvements for the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) corridor area. Appendix C presents a summary of the most recent proposal for a potential commuter rail line between Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee.

In 1998, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission completed a feasibility study and concluded that establishing a commuter rail service from Kenosha through Racine to Milwaukee was technically and financially feasible. In 2003, an initial alternatives analysis of commuter rail and bus alternatives for the KRM corridor was completed, followed by public hearings at which there was overwhelming support for the commuter rail alternative.

In February of 2005, an Intergovernmental Partnership (IGP) was formed among the County Executives and Mayors of Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine, the Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), and the Chairman of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The IGP agreed to conduct the necessary technical and environmental studies to permit the project to proceed to implementation. Each member of the IGP, other than the Regional Planning Commission, appointed a representative to serve on the KRM Project Steering Committee with the Regional Planning Commission serving as lead agency, project manager, and fiscal agent for the next phase of the KRM study. In July of 2005, the State Legislature and Governor enacted legislation creating a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) serving Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties which was to recommend a sponsor for the KRM project and a source to provide the necessary local funding for the project.

In July of 2007, alternative analysis of commuter rail and bus alternatives was completed, including all technical work for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). A subsequent application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approval of the DEIS was withdrawn by the RTA because the 2007-2009 Wisconsin State budget did not create a permanent RTA with the authority to construct and

operate a commuter rail line in the KRM corridor and did not provide a local dedicated funding source for the project.

In anticipation that the 2009-2011 Wisconsin State budget would provide a permanent RTA, the “temporary” RTA created in July of 2005 and the IGP continued to work on obtaining approval for the DEIS, updating the alternatives analysis, and preparing to apply for a Federal “New Starts” grant for the project’s capital funding.

In the 2009-2011 Wisconsin State budget, a permanent Southeastern Regional Transit Authority (SERTA) was created. SERTA was given the authority to construct and operate the KRM commuter rail line and to levy a vehicle rental fee of up to \$18 per transaction in each of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties.

In June of 2010, SERTA submitted an application to the FTA requesting permission to initiate preliminary engineering for the KRM commuter rail project under the FTA’s discretionary “New Starts” funding program. In June of 2011, the State Legislature and Governor repealed the State law creating SERTA, and required SERTA to dissolve in September 2011. In July of 2011, SERTA withdrew the “New Starts” application submitted to the FTA to enter preliminary engineering in anticipation of its dissolution and the project has been indefinitely postponed.

Description of Proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Line

The “New Starts” application submitted by SERTA to the FTA in 2010 presented the most recent description of the proposal for the KRM commuter rail project. In the application, the KRM commuter rail line was envisioned to have the following characteristics:

- Commuter rail service connecting Milwaukee and Racine to the existing Metra Chicago-Kenosha commuter rail service;
- Thirty-three-mile route using existing Union Pacific Railroad (UP) and Canadian Pacific Railway (CP) freight lines;
- Nine stations in Wisconsin:
 - Existing Metra Kenosha Station, recently renovated transit center in Racine, and the new Milwaukee Intermodal Station; and
 - New stations at Somers, Caledonia, Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, Cudahy-St. Francis, and Milwaukee’s South Side.

- Level of service:
 - Service provided in both directions during all weekday time periods;
 - A total of 30 daily weekday trains; and
 - Average speed of 38 mph.
- Shuttle service:
 - Dedicated service between Milwaukee Intermodal Station and various points in Milwaukee central business district; and
 - Dedicated service between General Mitchell International Airport (GMIA) and Cudahy-St. Francis station.
 - Shuttle service assumed to be provided with buses, but streetcar could potentially provide the downtown shuttle service linking KRM commuter rail with downtown Milwaukee should it be implemented.
- Train operation:
 - Service would meet existing Metra trains at Kenosha, allowing cross-platform transfers;
 - Contract with UP Railroad or a third party contractor.
- Diesel-multiple-unit cars (“DMUs” or self-propelled coaches).

Map C-1 presents the alignment of the proposed KRM commuter rail line.

The KRM commuter rail line was forecast to carry up to 8,300 riders per day by the year 2035, for an annual ridership of approximately 2.1 million, with more than 90 percent of trips for commuting purposes. Project capital costs for KRM commuter rail were estimated to be about \$284.1 million in year-of-expenditure dollars, based on an estimate of about \$233.2 million in 2009 dollars. Capital funding sources were expected to include the discretionary FTA Section 5309 “New Starts” program, the Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program, the State Section 85.064 Commuter Rail Development program, the State Section 85.11 Southeast Wisconsin Transit Capital Assistance program, and SERTA vehicle rental transaction fee proceeds and bonds.

The total annual operating and maintenance costs for the KRM commuter rail service were estimated to be about \$13.4 million in constant 2009 dollars. Operating funding sources were expected to primarily include the FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula program, the State Section 85.20 Mass Transit Operating Assistance program, project farebox revenues, and the SERTA vehicle rental transaction fee.

Map C-1
KRM Commuter Rail Alignment

