

Kenosha County on the Move

Beyond the KRM

On June 15th, 2010 the Legislative Committee of the Kenosha County Board heard citizen comments on resolution number 8 submitted by Supervisor Erin Decker. Supervisor Decker's resolution called for a county wide ballot referendum about the Kenosha Racine Milwaukee commuter rail line (KRM). Resolution 8 comes as a response to three bills that have been considered by the Wisconsin State Legislature, Senate Bill 205 (SB-205)/Assembly Bill 282 (AB-282), Assembly Bill 723 (AB-723)/Senate Bill 511 (SB-511) and Assembly Bill 75 (AB-75). All three bills deal with Regional Transportation Authorities (RTA) and specifically the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority (SERTA). AB-75 passed the legislature. After hearing citizens comments at the Legislative Committee meeting it became quite clear that not enough information has been disseminated both to locally elected officials and citizens. The disparity between the amount of information and its distribution needed a deeper inquiry as to what information was used to create SB-205/AB-282, AB-723/ SB-511, and AB-75. This inquiry revealed that strict focus on the taxation of the KRM prevented full discussion at the legislative committee meeting of the issues underlying the three bills moving through the legislature. This brief address questions raised by citizens during the citizen comments portion of the June 15th meeting of the Legislative Committee, and it addresses items that surfaced throughout the crafting of AB-282/SB-205, AB-723/SB-511, and AB-75 as well as other relevant considerations.

Kenosha County Supervisor Dayvin M A Hallmon
District #7
7/20/2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

History: How Was the RTA Formed?.....	Page 2
Taxation Options for Funding Transit.....	Page 3
Old Taxes, New Taxes, Existing Taxes, Returning Taxes, and Fees.....	Page 6
Current Transit in Kenosha County.....	Page 7
Current and Projected Transit Funding in Kenosha County.....	Page 7
Notes on General Transportation Funding.....	Page 12
Governor’s Vetoes and The Biennial Budget: SERTA’s Powers Under Law.....	Page 13
Issues with Local Impact.....	Page 15
What’s Happening Now?	Page 17
Arguments Against and in Favor of SERTA.....	Page 18
How Should the County Board Respond?	Page 19
What Can The Kenosha County Board Do?	Page 19
Conclusion.....	Page 20

History: How was the RTA formed?

In 1989 Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson created the Metro 2020 Policy Board. The Metro 2020 Policy Board was set with developing a comprehensive, long term, transportation strategy that would meet the needs of Wisconsin's economic development and quality of life issues. In 1991 the Metro Policy Board released its final report. In the 1991 report the 2020 Metro Policy Board recommended that RTAs be created.¹ A major difference between the Metro 2020 Policy Board and RTAs is that the Metro 2020 Policy Board included highways in their focus. In 1993 Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson signed, the biennial budget bill, 1993 Wisconsin Act 39. 1993 Wisconsin Act 39 created RTAs. These early RTAs were tasked with surveying existing transit systems, providing the outlook for new transit systems, proposing funding sources for transit, and creating the administrative structure for a permanent RTA.² In 1998, the SEWRPC (Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission) completed a feasibility study that concluded that establishing a 33.8 mile commuter rail service linking Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee was technically and financially feasible. With growing interest in mass transit an Interim RTA (IRTA) was created by the legislature and the governor in July 2005. The IRTA was given the task of performing transit studies and making recommendations to the state about how to fund and administer transit. In 2006 the name and mission of the IRTA changed and became the SERTA. The SERTA was established with the principal duty of recommending to the legislature and governor a permanent funding source for the local share of capital and operating costs of commuter rail and public transit. In November 2008 the SERTA, working with the SEWRPC, submitted a report to The Wisconsin State Legislature and the governor making recommendations to the state about how to fund public transit. The report concluded the following:³

Findings of the November 2008 SEWRPC Report⁴

Economic Growth: A quality public transit system is essential to maintaining and expanding the region's economic base

Public Service: Individuals depend upon public transit services to access jobs, education, medical facilities, churches, shopping and other destinations.

Reduced dependence on cars: Transit services provide opportunities for individuals to choose an alternative form of transportation

Environmental Impact: A more efficient and effective transportation system and land use pattern will provide environmental and energy conservation benefits

¹ K. Hammond, Harvey, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, "Metro 2020 Final Transportation Strategies for Milwaukee and Southeast Wisconsin" June 1991

² Regional Transportation Authority Board. *Report to Governor Thompson and the Wisconsin Legislature*. Rep. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Regional Transportation Authority, May 1993. Print.

³ Eagan, Kinnic. *Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)*. Issue brief no. 09-6. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, 2009. Print.

⁴ Ibid

While transit discussions were happening locally, the state legislature was forming special learning committees on RTAs. The Wisconsin State Legislature, through the Joint Legislative Council has special non-partisan learning and study committees that meet over the summer. The committees are made up of members of the legislature from both parties, citizens, business leaders, clergy, and other people from all walks of life. Sometimes these committees result in legislation that is presented to the Wisconsin State Legislature for action. Sometimes it's a change in the administrative structure of government; sometimes they produce only information without any action items. There have been two legislative study committees that have looked at forming RTAs. The first study committee met under former Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson. The second and more recent legislative council study committee on RTAs was formed in April 2008 and provided the impetus for the current bills. The committee charter for the 2008 Wisconsin State Legislature Learning Committee on RTAs states the following:⁵

The purpose of the committee is to review and provide recommendations on how to create a statutory framework enabling counties, cities, villages, and towns to create regional transportation authorities (RTA) to promote regional cooperation on transportation issues, including: the funding mechanisms to be used to support an RTA; the method of creation of an RTA, the representation and participation of member units of governments on an RTA; the types of transportation services that an RTA can be authorized to administer; and the scope and limits of RTA authority.

The 2008 Wisconsin Joint Legislative Council Special Learning Committee on RTAs was comprised of twenty-two members, including two state senators, and four state representatives. The committee held five meetings and heard from among others WisDOT; the Federal Transportation Administration; the Wisconsin Department of Revenue; the American Public Transportation Association; the Center for Neighborhood Technology; the National Transit Institute at Rutgers University; and the Public Policy Forum. The result of the committee's work was the creation of AB-282/SB-205 which was never enacted into law.⁶ The Wisconsin State Legislature created AB-723/SB-511 using data from the 2008 Special Learning Committee on RTAs.^{7,8} AB-723/SB-511 has not been enacted into law. AB-75 was created incorporating data from the 2008 Special Learning Committee on RTAs. AB-75 is the Wisconsin Biennial Budget. Due to the governors vetoes and modifications only portions of AB-75 were enacted into law.⁹

Taxation Options for Funding Transit

All the bills in the state legislature address funding options for RTAs. According to the Wisconsin DOR's Division of Research and Policy; the state of Wisconsin ranks 9th in the

⁵ Konopacki, Larry, and Scott Grosz. "2008 Interim Study Committee - Regional Transportation Authority." *Wisconsin State Legislature Legislative Council*. Wisconsin Legislative Council. Web. 28 June 2010. <<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/RTA/index.htm>>.

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ziegler, Paul /Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0723 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-4228/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, March 3, 2010. Print

⁸ Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. *2009 Wisconsin State Senate Bill 511 Analyses*. Rep. no. LRB-3451/9. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, /February 2, 2010. Print.

⁹ Wisconsin. Legislative Reference Bureau. *2008 Wisconsin Act 28*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, June 29, 2009. Print.

United States for having the highest property taxes. Accordingly, the DOR's Division of Research and Policy suggested in 2008, when meeting with the Special Learning Committee on RTAs, four potential funding sources were found that would not increase property taxes. The DOR's Division of Research and Policy argued further that these sources would be equitable, economically and administratively efficient, offer flexibility and stability, not impact growth negatively, and reflect voter preferences. The DOR recommended these four funding mechanisms: the county sales tax; municipal room taxes; municipal vehicle registration fees; and car rental fees.¹⁰

DOR's Division of Research and Policy Ideal RTA Funding Mechanisms¹¹

1. Sales Tax -Wisconsin counties may adopt a 0.5% sales tax imposed on the same goods and services that are subject to the state sales tax. The tax is "piggybacked" onto the state sales tax in that the county rate is added to the state rate and the county tax is administered, enforced, and collected by the state. The 0.5% tax applies to items purchased within the county and to some items purchased in a county without a tax, if they are customarily kept in a county with a tax (this is the "use" tax). The use tax applies to most registered vehicles and certain construction materials purchased by contractors. It also applies to items purchased out-of-state and brought to a county with the tax.¹² A county sales tax is considered to be easy to administer by the DOR while at the same time difficult to forecast due to its close relationship to changes in economic conditions. Wisconsin sales tax rate is the 33rd highest in the nation.¹³ Racine does not impose a county sales tax. Based on estimates published by the UW-Extension, Racine County could have generated \$13.2 million if Racine County had imposed the tax in 2009. While the figure may be modestly suppressed due to the current recession, the amount provides general guidance as to the maximum amount of revenue that could be generated from a sales tax rate assuming the tax is imposed at its highest allowable rate and over the entirety of the county.¹⁴ Kenosha does impose a 0.5% sales tax that piggybacks on the states 5% sales tax. Total sales tax in Kenosha County is 5.5%. In 2008 Kenosha County received \$10,324,102 in sales tax collections.^{15 16}

¹⁰ Koskinen, John /Division Administrator & Chief Economist, and Paul Ziegler/Sales & Property Tax Policy Team Leader. "Local Tax Options Methods and Administration." Lecture. 2008 Interim Study Committee on Regional Transportation Authorities. Madison, Wisconsin. 9 Oct. 2009. *Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority*. Wisconsin State Legislature Legislative Council, 9 Oct. 2009. Web. 29 June 2010. <<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/RTA/index.htm>>.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Runde, Al. *Local Government Revenue Options*. Publication no. 15. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

¹³ Koskinen, John /Division Administrator & Chief Economist, and Paul Ziegler/Sales & Property Tax Policy Team Leader. "Local Tax Options Methods and Administration." Lecture. 2008 Interim Study Committee on Regional Transportation Authorities. Madison, Wisconsin. 9 Oct. 2009. *Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority*. Wisconsin State Legislature Legislative Council, 9 Oct. 2009. Web. 29 June 2010. <<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/RTA/index.htm>>.

¹⁴ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0723 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-4228/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, March 3, 2010. Print.

¹⁵ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0282 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-2839/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, July 29, 2009. Print.

¹⁶ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *SB-205 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-2672/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, July 29, 2009. Print.

2. Short Term Lodging Tax “Room Tax”- Towns, villages, and cities have been authorized to impose a tax on establishments providing rooms or short-term lodging to the public. In general, the tax applies to hotels, motels, and rooming houses for lodging furnished for less than one month. The tax applies only to gross receipts from furnishing sleeping accommodations; therefore, food and other items or services furnished by hotels or motels are not subject to the tax. The room tax is in addition to state and county sales taxes that apply to room charges. To implement a room tax, a municipal governing body must adopt an ordinance that authorizes the tax, determines the tax rate, and designates the date the tax takes effect. Surveys of room tax rates have been conducted by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB). These surveys found that room tax rates have ranged from 1% to 10%. However, room tax rates have tended to increase. In 2002, the portion of municipalities with a room tax rate greater than 5% was 39.1%. In 2008, 48.6% of these municipalities had a room tax rate greater than 5%. 1993 Wisconsin Act 467 imposed a maximum tax rate of 8% and required that at least 70% of any new room taxes be used for tourism promotion and development. Kenosha County does not impose a room tax. However individual municipalities within Kenosha County do impose a room tax.¹⁷

Kenosha County Municipality Room Tax Rates¹⁸

Municipality	2008 room tax rate	2007 reported tax revenues	2006-2007 municipal property tax levy	Room revenue as % of property tax levy
Town of Bristol	8%	\$1,023	\$1,562,667	0.1%
City of Kenosha	8%	\$487,746	\$47,918,809	1.0%
Village of Pleasant Prairie	8%	\$52,031	\$7,319,650	0.7%
Town of Wheatland	8%	\$1,883	\$499,432	0.4%

3. Vehicle Registration Fee “wheel tax”- Since 1983, state permits any municipality or county to adopt an ordinance that imposes a flat, annual registration fee on automobiles and trucks of not more than 8,000 pounds customarily kept within that jurisdiction.¹⁹

Vehicles may be subject to both a municipal and a county fee. All vehicles exempt from the state fee are also exempt from local fees. There is no limit on the amount of the fee. The fee is collected by the Department of Transportation (DOT). Municipalities are permitted, but not required, to share any portion of the fee with the county or vice versa. Under 1997 Act 27, effective for 1998 revenues, any county or municipality that imposes an annual registration fee must use the revenues from the fee for transportation-related purposes. Currently the state charges a \$75 fee. According to the DOR a county addition to the fee is easy to administer but very few counties impose a local fee on top of the state fee. From 1977 to The City of Milwaukee, has instituted a

¹⁷ Runde, Al. *Local Government Revenue Options*. Publication no. 15. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

\$20 fee, which took effect November 1, 2008. From 1977 to 1978 the City of Kenosha, instituted a \$10 fee. Currently neither the County of Kenosha nor any municipality within its borders administers a vehicle registration fee.²⁰

4. Car Rental Registration Fee-2005 Wisconsin Act 25 provides the IRTA board with the authority to impose a vehicle rental fee that cannot exceed \$2 per rental transaction in the region. The IRTA board voted to impose this vehicle rental fee, effective July 1, 2006. DOR administers the rental fee and retains 2.55% of the fee revenues to cover its administrative costs associated with collecting the fee. However, at the end of each fiscal year, any unencumbered balance in DOR's administrative appropriation account that exceeds 10% of the expenditures from the appropriation during the fiscal year is also distributed to the IRTA. In 2007, DOR distributed \$947,600 to the IRTA associated with the vehicle rental fee.²¹ This \$2 rental fee expired in 2008 when the IRTA became SERTA. The rental car fee is projected to generate \$400,000-\$450,000.²²

Each bill, AB-282/SB-205, AB-723/SB-511, and AB-75 have at least one of these funding options within it. In some cases, combinations of these funding mechanisms are utilized to achieve the specified objectives detailed in each the bill.^{23 24 25 26 27} AB-282/SB-205 and AB-723/SB-511 differ from AB-75 in that AB-282/SB-205 and AB-723/SB-511 both deal with funding for all mass transit in the three county region not just the KRM. The governor left the question of a non-property tax levy dedicated funding source for all transit open ended by signing AB-75 into law.²⁸

Old Taxes, New Taxes, Existing Taxes, Returning Taxes, and Fees

In addition to providing financial estimates for state bills and analyzing the governor's budget, the LFB publishes informational papers in January of every odd numbered year explaining the history of how numerous state programs are funded. LFB informational paper number 15 titled Municipal Government Revenue Options provides a concise history of taxation in Wisconsin. The history of taxation in Wisconsin shows that Wisconsin has old taxes, returning taxes, new taxes and existing taxes. An old tax is a tax we no longer have. A new tax is when something is being taxed for the very first time. An existing tax is something we currently tax. A returning tax is something we once taxed, stopped taxing it, and now will be resuming a tax.

A fee differs from a tax in that a fee is a onetime charge for a use or service. Fees are

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² "RE: Two Last Questions." Message to the author. 19 July 2010. E-mail.

²³ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0282 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-2839/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, July 29, 2009. Print

²⁴ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *SB-205 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-2672/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, July 29, 2009. Print.

²⁵ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0723 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-4228/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, March 9, 2010. Print

²⁶ Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. *2009 Wisconsin State Senate Bill 511 Analyses*. Rep. no. LRB-3451/9. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, /February 2, 2010. Print.

²⁷ Wisconsin. Legislative Reference Bureau. *2008 Wisconsin Act 28*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, June 29, 2009. Print.

²⁸ Doyle, James /Governor of the State of Wisconsin, "Governor's Veto Message." Letter to Members of the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly. 2009. MS. Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Madison, Wisconsin.

typically set at a flat amount that does not fluctuate. Unlike taxes, fees are typically not administered on a percentage basis.

Current Transit Services in Kenosha County

Currently within Kenosha County, the City of Kenosha provides bus service within city limits. The Union Pacific Northwestern line also known as METRA runs through the City of Kenosha providing the city with commuter rail access to the City of Chicago and its surrounding municipalities. The interstate coach bus service Greyhound goes through the City of Kenosha. The interstate and intercity bus service Wisconsin Coach Lines also stops in the City of Kenosha. The City of Kenosha also has a few private companies that provide taxi cab service. The County of Kenosha provides mini bus service called Western Kenosha County Transit to people living on the western end of the county. Questions were also raised about a commuter rail line extension on the western end of Kenosha County coming into the county from Antioch, Illinois. A feasibility study for that rail line revealed that such a transit opportunity may be viable in the future.²⁹ The presence of the SERTA is expected to consolidate the funding sources for public transportation with funding to come from one source. The SERTA would target state and federal grants more efficiently and to reduce the local property tax burden to pay for public transit.

Current and Projected Transit Funding in Kenosha County

Kenosha Transit (buses and streetcars)

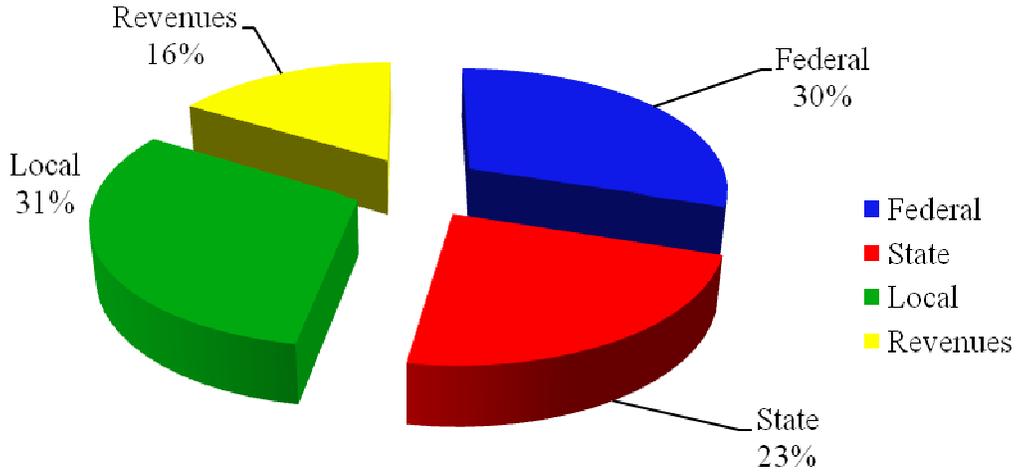
Kenosha Transit Operations and Maintenance Cost 2008 ³⁰

Expenses	Revenues	Federal	State	Local	Total
\$7,073,300	\$1,235,200	\$2,276,100	\$1,723,900	\$1,838,100	\$5,838,100

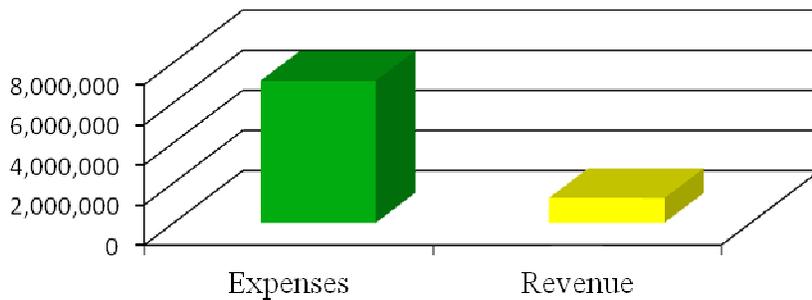
²⁹ Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. "Chapter 11 Transportation Element." *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035*. Vol. 1. Waukesha, Wisconsin: Southeastern Wisconsin, January 2010. XI-6. Print

³⁰ City of Kenosha and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Corrected Operating Revenues for Kenosha Area Transit*. Rep. no. 152499v1. Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Southeastern Wisconsin Planning Commission, July 14, 2010. Print.

Kenosha Transit Operations and Maintenance Cost 2008



Kenosha Transit Expenses and Revenue from Operations and Maintenance Cost 2008



The local share of the money for Kenosha Transit is paid for from the general fund of the city of Kenosha. In 2008 Kenosha Transit increased bus fares by 25%. This took the fare from \$1.00 to \$1.25. Where this may seem like a small cost, every fare increase means a reduction in the number of passengers. A great deal of federal funding for transit utilizes formulas where the allocation derives from the number of passengers the system services. Due to various budget cycles, Kenosha County being the standard calendar year, the state of Wisconsin being from July 1st to June 30th, and the federal government from October 1st to September 30th, some data is still unavailable as funds are dispersed at differing times.

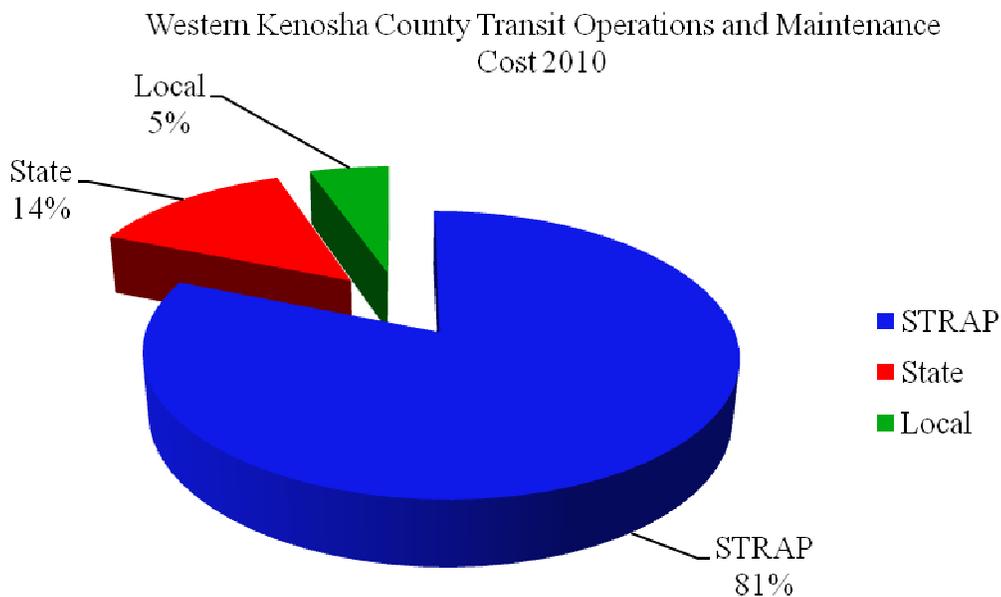
Western Kenosha County Transit

Western Kenosha County Transit started operating in September of 2007. Western Kenosha County Transit is made possible through the federal Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program (STRAP). The state had authority for three years under STRAP to offer an 80/20 match. The funding was to end in 2009, but they offered a grant in 2010 with leftover money from the previous years. Kenosha County applied and was awarded funding for each of the four years STRAP was available. Going forward to 2011, we need to apply for 5311 federal/state funding which typically is at a 60/40 match - sometimes going up to 65/35 depending on the volume of applicants. We are just now crafting budget scenarios which detail

what type of service cuts we may have to implement to work with the levy we can afford.³¹ The local share of the money for Western Kenosha County Transit comes from the county property tax levy.³² The SERTA would very well provide a stable funding mechanism to keep the Western Kenosha County Transit program in place possibly even expand it. Most municipalities within Kenosha County have expressed a desire to grow their populations. Under the SERTA Western Kenosha County Transit would be able to facilitate and enhance the population growth of municipalities on the western end of Kenosha County. Western Kenosha County Transit through the SERTA would provide access to people that are looking to reside in light urban communities or just traveling across municipal boundaries for work.

Western Kenosha County Transit Operations and Maintenance Cost 2010^{33 34}

Federal STRAP	State	Local
\$513,640	\$89,000	\$34,855



The state funds come from WisDOT's county disabled and elderly assistance program administered under state statute 82.21.³⁵ The local amount comes from the county property tax levy.³⁶

³¹ "RE: County Sup. Western Kenosha County Transit." Message to the author. 14 July 2010. E-mail.

³² "2010 Kenosha County Budget." Kenosha, Wisconsin: Kenosha County, 2010. 159-60. Print.

³³ "RE: County Sup. Western Kenosha County Transit." Message to the author. 14 July 2010. E-mail.

³⁴ "2010 Kenosha County Budget." Kenosha, Wisconsin: Kenosha County, 2010. 159-60. Print.

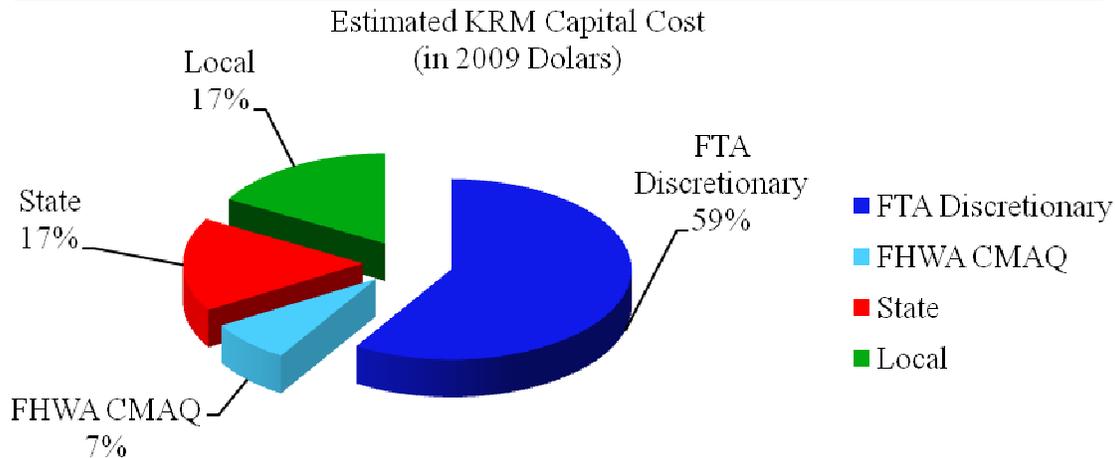
³⁵ Dyck, Jon. *Transportation Finance*. Publication no. 40. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

³⁶ "2010 Kenosha County Budget." Kenosha, Wisconsin: Kenosha County, 2010. 159-60. Print.

KRM Commuter Rail

Estimated KRM Capital Cost (in 2009 dollars)³⁷

Federal discretionary grant (FTA)	FHWA CMAQ	State	Local	Total
\$140,000,000	\$18,000,000	\$35,000,000 – \$40,000,000	\$35,000,000- \$40,000,000	\$232,700,000



The FTA discretionary funds are from the New Transit System Capital Assistance grant program also known as the “New Starts” grant program.³⁸ Many communities across the nation obtain money from the “New Starts” grant program each year. In order to apply for the FTA “New Starts” grant the entity applying must have a local source for funding transportation.³⁹ The rental car fee satisfies the application requirement.⁴⁰ The rental car fee was \$2. The \$2 rental car fee ended in 2009. In 2007, DOR distributed \$947,600 to the SERTTA associated with the vehicle rental fee.⁴¹ The local share of the capital costs of the KRM project is expected to be \$35 million – \$40 million (in 2009 dollars)⁴², making the local share 17% of the total capital cost. This 17%

³⁷ The Southeastern Wisconsin Transportation Authority and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Transportation Builds A Strong Economy*. Rep. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority, 2010. Print.

³⁸ *Federal Transportation Administration Major Capital Investments (New Starts & Small Starts) (5309)*. Tech. United States Department of Transportation. Web. 14 July 2010. <http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3559.html>.

³⁹ *Federal Transportation Administration Major Capital Investments (New Starts & Small Starts) (5309)*. Tech. United States Department of Transportation. Web. 14 July 2010. <http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3559.html>.

⁴⁰ Doyle, James /Governor of the State of Wisconsin, "Governor's Veto Message." Letter to Members of the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly. 2009. MS. Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁴¹ Runde, Al. *Local Government Revenue Options*. Publication no. 15. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

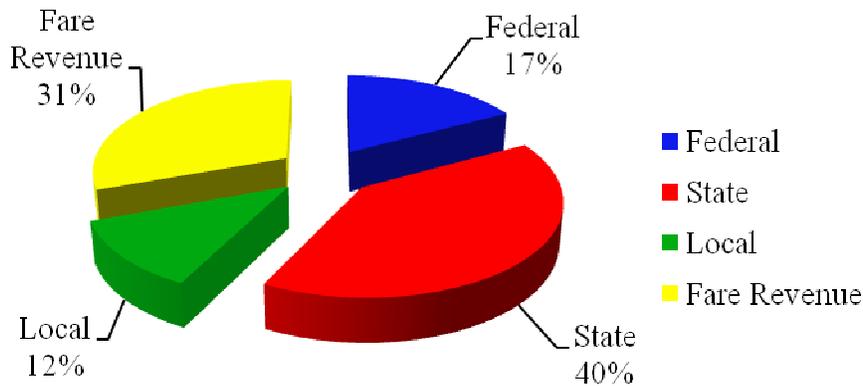
⁴² The Southeastern Wisconsin Transportation Authority and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Transportation Builds A Strong Economy*. Rep. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority, 2010. Print.

would be divided among Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties.⁴³ The FHWA is the Federal Highway administration. CMAQ is the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality improvement program. CMAQ funds may only be used in counties that are classified as ozone non-attainment or ozone maintenance areas. Kenosha is classified as an ozone non-attainment county.^{44 45} Part of the capital costs will go to six new train depots. Three of the nine train depots along the KRM route are already in place. The rail lines for the KRM are already in existence. Additional capital costs would be trains and signal upgrades.⁴⁶

Annual Operating Cost of KRM (in 2009 dollars)⁴⁷

Federal	State	Local	fare revenue	Total
\$2,300,000	\$5,400,000	\$1,600,000	\$4,100,000	\$13,400,000

Annual Operating Cost of KRM (in 2009 Dollars) by Percentage



The local share of the annual operating cost of the KRM project is expected to be \$1.6 million (2009 dollars), making the operating cost of the local share 12%. The 12% local share would be divided between Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee counties.⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that the percentage of fare revenue is more than twice the percentage of the local share. KRM ridership projections are developed in concert with FTA experts, using the same methodologies used for successful commuter rail systems in cities like

⁴³ The Southeastern Wisconsin Transportation Authority and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Transportation Builds A Strong Economy*. Rep. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority, 2010. Print.

⁴⁴ Dyck, Jon. *Local Transportation Assistance Programs*. Publication no. 43. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

⁴⁵ Bonderud, Kendra. *Air Management Programs*. Publication no. 61. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

⁴⁶ HNTB Cambridge Systematics, American Design, Bay Ridge Consulting, Connetics Transportation Group, Heritage Research, Inc., Martinsek & Associates, and Valerie Kretchmer Associates. *Racine-Kenosha-Milwaukee Commuter Extension Environmental Impact Statement & Project Development Phase Capital and Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimates*. Tech. Earth Tech, January 2007. Print.

⁴⁷ The Southeastern Wisconsin Transportation Authority and the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Transportation Builds A Strong Economy*. Rep. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority, 2010. Print.

⁴⁸ Ibid

Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Denver and Portland.⁴⁹ The KRM would be eligible for federal Fixed Guide way Capital Assistance Grants.⁵⁰

The current KRM structure is a starting point; the SERTA has made recommendations regarding additional routes and the inclusion of new municipalities. Additionally, the KRM is part of a transit system that will include bus routes that will extend far beyond the reach of the rail line, connecting neighboring areas to the commuter rail. As part of the KRM operation the KRM will meet up with Wisconsin Coach Lines at several points along the route and meet up with the MCTS freeway flyer route 48 at the northern portion of the commuter rail route.⁵¹

General Notes on Transportation Funding

State and federal gasoline taxes are primarily used to set up transportation grant and transportation assistance programs.⁵² Aside from the gasoline tax, sometimes an additional appropriation or earmark at the federal level is made for transportation. At the state level sometimes money from the general fund is appropriated for certain transportation goals or items. The proposed 0.5% increase in the sales tax and the car rental fee appear in both AB-282/SB-205 and AB-723/SB-511.^{53 54} These two funding mechanisms would go specifically to fund transit. At present, total sales tax in Kenosha County is 5.5%. In 2008 Kenosha County received \$10,324,102 in sales tax collections.^{55 56} Under current law the Kenosha County sales tax is for property tax relief only.⁵⁷ The \$2 rental car fee expired in 2009. Under current law the rental car fee, which can but has not been instituted, is specifically for transit.⁵⁸ The \$10-\$11 rental car fee increase would bring the fee up to \$18. Only AB-723/SB-511 include the room tax and the vehicle registration fee as part how transportation is going to be funded.^{59 60} Neither AB-282/SB-205 nor AB-723/SB-511 was passed into law. The purpose of these funding mechanisms is to

⁴⁹ HNTB Cambridge Systematics, American Design, Bay Ridge Consulting, Connetics Transportation Group, Heritage Research, Inc., Martinsek & Associates, and Valerie Kretchmer Associates. *Racine-Kenosha-Milwaukee Commuter Extension Environmental Impact Statement & Project Development Phase Capital and Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimates*. Tech. Earth Tech, January 2007. Print.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ HNTB Cambridge Systematics, American Design, Bay Ridge Consulting, Connetics Transportation Group, Heritage Research, Inc., Martinsek & Associates, and Valerie Kretchmer Associates. *Racine-Kenosha-Milwaukee Commuter Extension Environmental Impact Statement & Project Development Phase Capital and Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimates*. Tech. Earth Tech, January 2007. Print.

⁵² Dyck, Jon. *Transportation Finance*. Publication no. 40. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

⁵³ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0723 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-4228/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, March 9, 2010. Print

⁵⁴ Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. *2009 Wisconsin State Senate Bill 511 Analyses*. Rep. no. LRB-3451/9. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, /February 2, 2010. Print.

⁵⁵ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0282 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-2839/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, July 29, 2009. Print

⁵⁶ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *SB-205 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-2672/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, July 29, 2009. Print.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Wisconsin. Legislative Reference Bureau. *2008 Wisconsin Act 28*. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, June 29, 2009. Print.

⁵⁹ Ziegler, Paul/Wisconsin Department of Revenue. *AB-0723 Fiscal Estimate*. Rep. no. 09-4228/1. Madison, Wisconsin: Legislative Fiscal Bureau, March 9, 2010. Print

⁶⁰ /Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. *2009 Wisconsin State Senate Bill 511 Analysis*. Rep. no. LRB-3451/9. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, /February 2, 2010. Print.

fund all transit not just the KRM and to take all transit off of the property tax levy entirely.

Governor's Vetoes and The Wisconsin Biennial Budget: SERTA's Powers Under Law

Before signing AB-75 into law, where it would then become 2009 Wisconsin Act 28, there were a several provisions passed by the legislature that did not become active due to vetoes and partial vetoes by the governor.⁶¹

2009 Wisconsin Act 28 Governor's Biennial Budget Vetoes as it relates to the SERTA⁶²

1. The referenda requirements and a proposed Milwaukee Transit Authority

Governor's reason: *"Regional cooperation in the southeast region is vital for the continued prosperity of Southeastern Wisconsin. These provisions do not move in the direction of regional cooperation and leave serious concerns about the ability of the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Link to move to completion. By vetoing these provisions, I am allowing the creation of a transit authority that can move forward with the planning process on the rail link while eliminating provisions that hamper regional cooperation. I encourage the Legislature to bring forward a proposal with a stable revenue source dedicated solely to transit across the region, in order to move regional transit forward. I object to state mandated referenda deciding questions on local transit. Local county boards and transit authority boards are permitted to require referenda before creating regional transit authorities or imposing sales and use taxes, if local preferences dictate. By vetoing this provision, questions about the need for referenda to decide local transit questions can be decided locally."*

2. A requirement that revenues equal to the amount derived from \$1.00 of the vehicle rental fee be provided to the cities of Kenosha and Racine for their respective transit systems, if the cities establish a new funding source to match these revenues.

Governor's reason: *"Though I am opposed to the rental car fee as the funding mechanism for the transit authority, I cannot veto it because the transit authority must have a local funding source to move forward with the federal application process. However, I strongly recommend to the board of the transit authority not to impose the entire amount of the fee until New Start plans are approved by the Federal Transit Administration."*

3. A prohibition on KRM commuter rail stops in Kenosha or Racine counties, other than in the cities of Kenosha and Racine unless the municipality where the stop is located provides a sustainable funding mechanism to contribute to the existing Kenosha or Racine transit systems;

4. A requirement that the KRM commuter rail line include stops in the city of Milwaukee at the specified locations.

⁶¹ Doyle, James /Governor of the State of Wisconsin, "Governor's Veto Message." Letter to Members of the Wisconsin State Senate and Assembly. 2009. MS. Legislative Fiscal Bureau, Madison, Wisconsin.

⁶² Ibid

Governor's reason: *"It jeopardizes the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Link application to the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts grant program. Requiring or prohibiting stops at specific locations violates Federal Transit Administration regulations requiring alternative route analysis as part of the environmental impact study process. Vetoing this provision allows the environmental process to proceed as federal regulations require.*

5. The ability of any transit system in Kenosha or Racine counties, by a vote of the municipal governing body to contract with the SERTA to provide transit services

When AB-75 was signed into law, it became 2009 Wisconsin Act 28.

SERTA Language in 2009 Wisconsin Act 28^{63 64}

1. Authorizes the three counties of Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha to create, construct and manage a KRM commuter rail line.
2. The authority is to be governed by a nine member board, consisting of: two appointees of the Milwaukee Mayor, one appointee of the Kenosha County Board, one appointee of the Racine Mayor and one appointee of the governor.
3. The SERTA board may, by resolution impose a vehicle rental fee in an amount of up to \$18.00 per vehicle rental as provided in section 77.9971 of the Wisconsin State Statutes to raise revenue.
4. The board may also issue up to \$50 Million in bonds for the KRM commuter rail line and is an eligible applicant under the newly created southeastern Wisconsin transit capital assistance program as provided in section 85.11 of the Wisconsin Statutes.
5. The SERTA is the only entity in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties that can apply to the Federal Transit Administration for federal new starts funding for the KRM commuter rail line. The application must be submitted by June 30th, 2010 to enter the preliminary engineering item of the project.

Transportation Planning

The purpose of the SERTA is to coordinate a regional transit system for maximum efficiency, and eliminate any "competition" for passengers. In order to do this transit in the three counties will be funded according to a local transit planning group in each county that is made up of members appointed by local elected officials. This group will develop a transit service plan and budget that will be submitted to the SERTA. The SERTA will then use the transit revenue to prioritize and fund the recommended transit plans, including existing transit needs within and between counties, as well as new elements recommended by the local transit groups. Thus, local officials will assist the SERTA determine the priorities of

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ Wisconsin. Legislative Reference Bureau. 2008 Wisconsin Act 28. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, June 29, 2009. Print.

their individual counties and funds will be distributed accordingly.⁶⁵

Issues with Local Impact

Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS)

Many news articles have been written about the MCTS. While being ranked number one in efficiency among its peer systems, presently, the MCTS fares are among the highest in the nation. Fuel and fringe benefit expenses continue to rise. There have been numerous service cuts and route cuts which have led to decreases in the ridership, the number of miles, and the hours of operations. Tense political relationships and political philosophies have made increases in the property tax to accommodate the MCTS nonexistent. State assistance has remained relatively flat and federal assistance funds have been used more for operating assistance, less for capital expenditures. The situation regarding MCTS is at a critical point where a decision must be made and soon. The only options that currently exist are to cut service, raise fares, divert property tax funds from other budget line items, increase the property tax, or rebid the transit management contract.⁶⁶ Many members of the Wisconsin State Legislature see the creation of the SERTA as a way for Milwaukee County to restore its transit service. Many transit systems in Wisconsin are facing similar circumstances.

Comprehensive Planning “Smart Growth”

Transportation Planning is directly related to housing, land use, employment, economics and education.⁶⁷ ⁶⁸ “Smart Growth” plans on the west coast have been extremely effective tools for providing the framework for planning and supporting transportation networks. At the very end of the last legislative session the Kenosha County Board voted on the county wide Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan also called “smart growth“. The plan was a directive from the state of Wisconsin. In order to fulfill that directive, the plan had to contain certain elements and be finished within a certain time frame. Each municipality was to design their own comprehensive plan that would be voted on at the municipal level then the county level. Dialogues were held with citizens to make sure citizen input was heard and included. Existing data from federal and state sources such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) was used to help draft the future plans. The data was compiled by SEWRPC, Kenosha County Planning and Development, and Kenosha County UW-Extension. The Transportation Element of the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan was not as detailed as other elements of the Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan. However, Chapter 11, containing the transportation element, does make mention of the creation of a Kenosha Countywide Transportation Plan⁶⁹ which due to unknown circumstances, is on hold midway

⁶⁵ Transit Now, The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority, and The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Responding to Reason Fact Sheet*. Rep. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority. Print.

⁶⁶ Henken, Rob /President Public Policy Forum, the Southeastern Wisconsin Transportation Authority. "Milwaukee County's Transit Crisis." November 2008. Address.

⁶⁷ Moore/ECO Northwest, Terry. "Evaluating Options for Urban Transportation: A Framework." Address. American Planning Association Conference. 2010. Web. 20 June 2010.
<<http://www.planning.org/conference/speakers/materials/pdf/W406.pdf>>.

⁶⁸ Poticha, Shelly /Reconnecting America, "Task 4E: Transit Oriented Development: Quantifying Density's Affect on Transit Ridership in the Bay Area (Final Version)." (4 Apr. 2006). Print.

⁶⁹ Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. "Chapter 11 Transportation Element." *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035*. Vol. 1. Waukesha, Wisconsin: Southeastern

through its completion. A great deal can still be gleaned from other elements of the plan as it relates to transportation. The housing, demographics and land use elements of the plan go into great detail about the current state of affairs and what the future projections look like. Virtually all of the municipalities within Kenosha County have expressed a desire to increase the population density of their municipalities and enhance their economic development initiatives. A look at the planned zonings in municipalities gives us a very good idea as to where certain types of businesses will be located. This kind of information is necessary in engineering a well utilized and financially efficient transportation network. Transportation can and often does fuel population and economic growth. Between the year 2000 and 2035 Kenosha County's population is projected to increase by 40.5%. This would take our population from 149,577 in the year 2000, to 210,078 in the year 2035.⁷⁰

Demographic Trends

There are a number of present and future trends that may strongly influence the creation of the SERTA. Among them are age, housing, employment, education and economics. Numerous news articles indicate that millennials, persons born between 1995 and 1980, express a desire to live in light urban environments. Polling of millennials suggest that environmental sustainability, the ability to live within reach of friends, to live within reach of work, the inability to afford houses for home ownership, and quick access to sporting and arts venues are all factors that lead millennials to choose light urban living over suburban living.^{71 72} Information like this makes the western end of our county very attractive. However a transportation network is vital to facilitate the growth and development of those areas in Kenosha County west of the interstate.

Utilizing data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the DOA, SEWRPC projected that from the years 2000 to 2035 the number of elderly persons 65 and higher in Kenosha County was going to increase by 98.9%.⁷³ The SERTA could prove valuable for senior citizens, many of whom are low income and have expressed a desire for greater access to entertainment venues. The SERTA would have the benefit of connecting seniors with Milwaukee and Racine counties so they could participate in concerts, sporting events, and festivals without the pressure of having to spend money on gasoline and out of pocket maintenance of vehicles. The poorest 20% of Americans spend 42% of their family income on purchasing, maintaining and buying fuel for their automobiles.⁷⁴

Family structure is slowly going through a change. The structure of a family is heavily rooted in the economy. When economic times are positive families move apart from one another.

Wisconsin, January 2010. XI-4. Print

⁷⁰ Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. "Chapter 7 Issues and Opportunities Element." *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035*. Vol. 1. Waukesha, Wisconsin: Southeastern Wisconsin, January 2010. VII-4. Print.

⁷¹ *Wall Street Journal*. Wall Street Journal, 17 June 2008. Web. 29 June 2010. <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121366811790479767.html>>.

⁷² Ellen Dunham-Jones: Retrofitting Suburbia. Atlanta, Georgia. Jan. 2010. *TED Ideas Worth Spreading*. Technology, Design, June 2010. Web. 14 June 2010. <http://www.ted.com/talks/ellen_dunham_jones_retrofitting_suburbia.html>.

⁷³ Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. "Chapter 7 Issues and Opportunities Element." *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035*. Vol. 1. Waukesha, Wisconsin: Southeastern Wisconsin, January 2010. VII-4. Print.

⁷⁴ Transit Now, The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority, and The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. *Responding to Reason Fact Sheet*. Rep. Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Transportation Authority. Print.

When economic times are not good families tend to join together. Many economists say the recession in the U.S. is going to be an L-shaped recession, meaning that the jobs that were lost will not be coming back for a very long period of time.⁷⁵ We can expect to see many families that have two, three, or four generations living under the same roof. What impact this will have on gas consumption and public transit is unclear. Although the market does adjust to such changes, the recent “credit crisis” which made it difficult for many people to afford new cars is still not resolved.

Roads

In 2009 the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) began expanding 35 miles of the I-94 between the Wisconsin border and Milwaukee. The expansion takes each direction from six to four lanes. WisDOT examined current traffic data, population growth data, and economic data to determine where, when, how and to what extent the I-94 needed to be expanded. The current expansion in progress is to reduce congestion and increase traffic flow. Transportation studies show that the wider streets become and the more lanes are added only invites more traffic thereby increasing traffic problems and increasing commute times. The I-94 project is expected to cost 1.9 billion dollars and be completed in 2016.⁷⁶ WisDOT officials agree that solely expanding the I-94 will not solve the transportation problem that exists along the I-94 corridor.

Environment and Health

The amount of cars that operate in and pass through Kenosha County contribute to a great deal of air pollution. In 2004 Kenosha County was designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a moderate non-attainment zone based on the Air Ambient Quality Standards (NAAQS) established under the Federal Clean Air Act of 1990. The Federal Clean Air Act of 1990 establishes guidelines for air pollution based on the concentration of pollution and length of time exposed. Under NAAQS pollution concentrations that fall below the standards are considered acceptable. In short, the amount of air pollutants within Kenosha County that cause ozone, also known as smog, exceed the limits during an 8 hour work day of what is considered acceptable. This leads problems such as damage to the respiratory system; emphysema; changes in lung structure; damage to rubber; damage to crops; and damage to fabrics.⁷⁷

What’s Happening Now?

There has not been any consolidation of funds for mass transit across governing lines. Transit systems operated by separate local governments continue to remain separate. It is thought that the state will pass some form of a bill regarding SERTA after the summer or during the next legislative session. The SERTA is awaiting the FTA’s decision about awarding the “New Starts

⁷⁵ Roubini, Nouriel /Professor of Economics at the New York University Stern School of Business and Chairman of Roubini Global Economics. "Roubini Global Economics - Nouriel Roubini's EconoMonitor." *Roubini Global Economics - Home*. Apr. 2009. Web. 17 July 2010. <http://www.roubini.com/roubini-monitor/252471/estimates_of_1_trillion_are_now_a_floor_not_a_ceiling_for_the_losses_in_this_financial_crisis>.

⁷⁶ Barr, Damien /ARM-P, CRIS, CSE- Manager of Risk Management, Wisconsin Department of Transportation. "Wisconsin Dept. Of Transportation 2010 Contractor-Engineer Conference." Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 1 July 2010. Address.

⁷⁷ Bonderud, Kendra. *Air Management Programs*. Publication no. 61. 2009 ed. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, January 2009. Print.

Grant” before moving forward.

Arguments Against and in Favor of Initiatives to Expand Mass Transit

Arguments Voiced Against Initiatives to Expand Mass Transit

1. FTA assistance to SERTA cannot be relied upon because large federal deficits could impact funding of the FTA at current or expected levels."
2. The state of Wisconsin has made too many budget commitments it can't keep.⁷⁸
3. A reduction in gas consumption due to high prices might bring the reappearance of a gas tax holiday. Transportation assistance funds come from the gasoline tax. Such an event can negatively impact mass transit assistance and state and local governments would be stuck with the bill.
4. Not many people use public transportation in Kenosha County.
5. I want to be able to vote on who can sit on the SERTA board.
6. Instead of trying to reach out as an economic development strategy we should focus on infill, creating jobs in underutilized areas. Doing so would save the environment too.

Arguments that have been Voiced in Favor of Initiatives to Expand Mass Transit

1. The SERTA provides us with the flexibility to meet the needs of a changing populace.
2. UW-Parkside has room to grow and has one of the lowest college tuition costs in the state.
3. Locally we already fund transit. We need to find a way to reduce the property tax levy so that we can have a sustainable system.
4. We need to better connect our citizens to job and recreational opportunities that exist in Milwaukee and in the western part of Kenosha County.
5. We need to improve public transit by adding services so that people who work third and second shift can utilize the system
6. Support and assist in bringing about 71,000 jobs through transit-oriented development.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Vock, Daniel C., Pamela M. Prah, Stephen C. Fehr, Melissa Maynard, John Gramlich, and Kimberly Leonard. *The Pew Center on the States*. Rep. The Pew Research Center, Nov. 2009. Web. 17 July 2010.

<http://downloads.pewcenteronthestates.org/BeyondCalifornia.pdf>

⁷⁹ HNTB Cambridge Systematics, American Design, Bay Ridge Consulting, Connetics Transportation Group, Heritage Research, Inc., Martinsek & Associates, and Valerie Kretchmer Associates. *Racine-Kenosha-Milwaukee Commuter Extension Environmental Impact Statement & Project Development Phase Capital and Operating & Maintenance Cost Estimates*. Tech. Earth Tech, January 2007. Print.

How Should Members of the Kenosha County Board Respond?

In response to citizen inquiries about why the county board is taking up transit as an issue, here are some things to keep in mind:

1. Wisconsin residents have the 9th highest property taxes in the nation.⁸⁰
2. Currently everyone in Kenosha County pays for mass transit, in one way or another because locally mass transit is currently funded from the property tax levy.
3. Municipalities in consultation with citizens have made decisions from data provided by SEWRPC and the U.S. Census. Kenosha County is expected to have an increase in its population.
4. Between the year 2000 and 2035 Kenosha County will experience a 98.9% increase in its elderly resident population and a 40% increase in its overall population.⁸¹
5. We must find ways to facilitate economic and population growth and provide a livable community for the elderly.

What Can The Kenosha County Board Do?

The Kenosha County Board has a variety of options:

1. Hold an informational session with SEWRPC and SERTA for county supervisors and locally elected officials.
2. Hold a county wide town hall with SEWRPC and SERTA so that elected officials and citizens gain understanding.
3. Write one or more of the following resolution(s):
 - A. Write a resolution that frames a philosophical commitment and policy justification for supporting certain public transit initiatives or not supporting public transit initiatives.
 - B. A resolution that sets a deadline for the county wide transit plan.
 - C. Write a resolution supporting or not supporting one of the proposed bills or a resolution that supports parts of various bills joined together.

⁸⁰ Koskinen, John /Division Administrator & Chief Economist, and Paul Ziegler/Sales & Property Tax Policy Team Leader. "Local Tax Options Methods and Administration." Lecture. 2008 Interim Study Committee on Regional Transportation Authorities. Madison, Wisconsin. 9 Oct. 2009. *Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority*. Wisconsin State Legislature Legislative Council, 9 Oct. 2009. Web. 29 June 2010. <<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/committees/study/2008/RTA/index.htm>>.

⁸¹ Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. "Chapter 7 Issues and Opportunities Element." *A Multi-Jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035*. Vol. 1. Waukesha, Wisconsin: Southeastern Wisconsin, January 2010. VII-4. Print.

- D. Write a resolution detailing revenue thresholds that the SERTA must meet in order to advance the consolidation of transit services.
 - E. Write a resolution that details what, in the opinion of the county board, the structure and/or powers of the SERTA should be and the structure of the SERTA.
 - F. Write resolutions that create ballot initiatives that would support or oppose certain funding mechanisms.
4. The county board can wait for the state to make its decision with an advisory or other input from the county.

Conclusion

Although there are a variety of actions that can be taken and public pressure urges immediate action, in any case the general public deserves clear information about the SERTA. Merely to have conversations about the SERTA and public transit at the Kenosha County Board Legislative Committee is not enough. The existence of this document is not enough. The reaction of the public to recent public transit issues appears largely to be the result of misinformation, a lack of information on how the SERTA came into existence, the structure of SERTA, proposed funding mechanisms for the SERTA, the SERTA's relationship to the comprehensive plan, and how citizens can be involved in the decision making process. Perhaps before any action is taken it should be the duty of public officials to reach out to the SEWRPC, the SERTA, the DOR, and the WisDOT to have an informational session so that public officials can be fully informed. Then host town halls for citizens so that interested citizens can have the correct and most up to date information. Only then we can move forward as a community to decide best what meets the needs of the residents of Kenosha County.