

Community Planning Report No. 347

KENOSHA AREA TRANSIT ROUTE STUDY AND UPDATE

**Preliminary Draft**

**CHAPTER 1**

At the request of the City of Kenosha, the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (Commission) is preparing a review of, and identifying potential updates to, bus routes for the Kenosha Area Transit system to meet the short-term needs of residents and employers. Specifically, this study—entitled the Kenosha Area Transit Route Study and Update—will evaluate existing bus route performance, identify short-term needs through engagement with local officials and public outreach, and recommend potential changes to route service and alignments.

In January 2024, Commission staff completed an assessment of potential bus route changes that considered a potential transit center located adjacent to the Kenosha Innovation Neighborhood (KIN). The assessment determined that given the potential new transfer center’s proximity to the mixed-use development and its more centralized location, most transit riders would benefit from improved access and travel time savings. This study builds on the previous assessment by including an evaluation of existing transit services and a public involvement process.

This updated bus route assessment for Kenosha Area Transit is being conducted within the context of the adopted regional transportation plan for Southeastern Wisconsin. The current year 2050 regional land use and transportation plan—VISION 2050—was adopted by the Commission in 2016 and reaffirmed and updated in 2024.<sup>1</sup> The plan includes a public transit element that recommends significant improvement in and expansion of transit service in the Region over the next 30 years. Map 1.1 shows the public transit

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<sup>1</sup> See *Planning Report No. 55*, VISION 2050: A Regional Land Use and Transportation Plan for Southeastern Wisconsin, July 2016, and updated in *Memorandum Report No. 268*, 2024 Review and Update of VISION 2050, June 2024.

**Map 1.1**  
**Public Transit Element: VISION 2050**

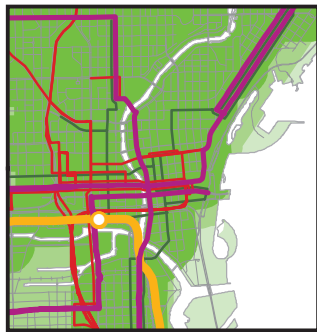
**TRANSIT SERVICES**

- RAPID TRANSIT LINE
- EXPRESS BUS ROUTE
- COMMUTER RAIL LINE & STATION
- COMMUTER BUS ROUTE & PARK-RIDE
- INTERCITY RAIL
- STREETCAR LINE

**LOCAL TRANSIT SERVICE AREA AND PEAK FREQUENCY**

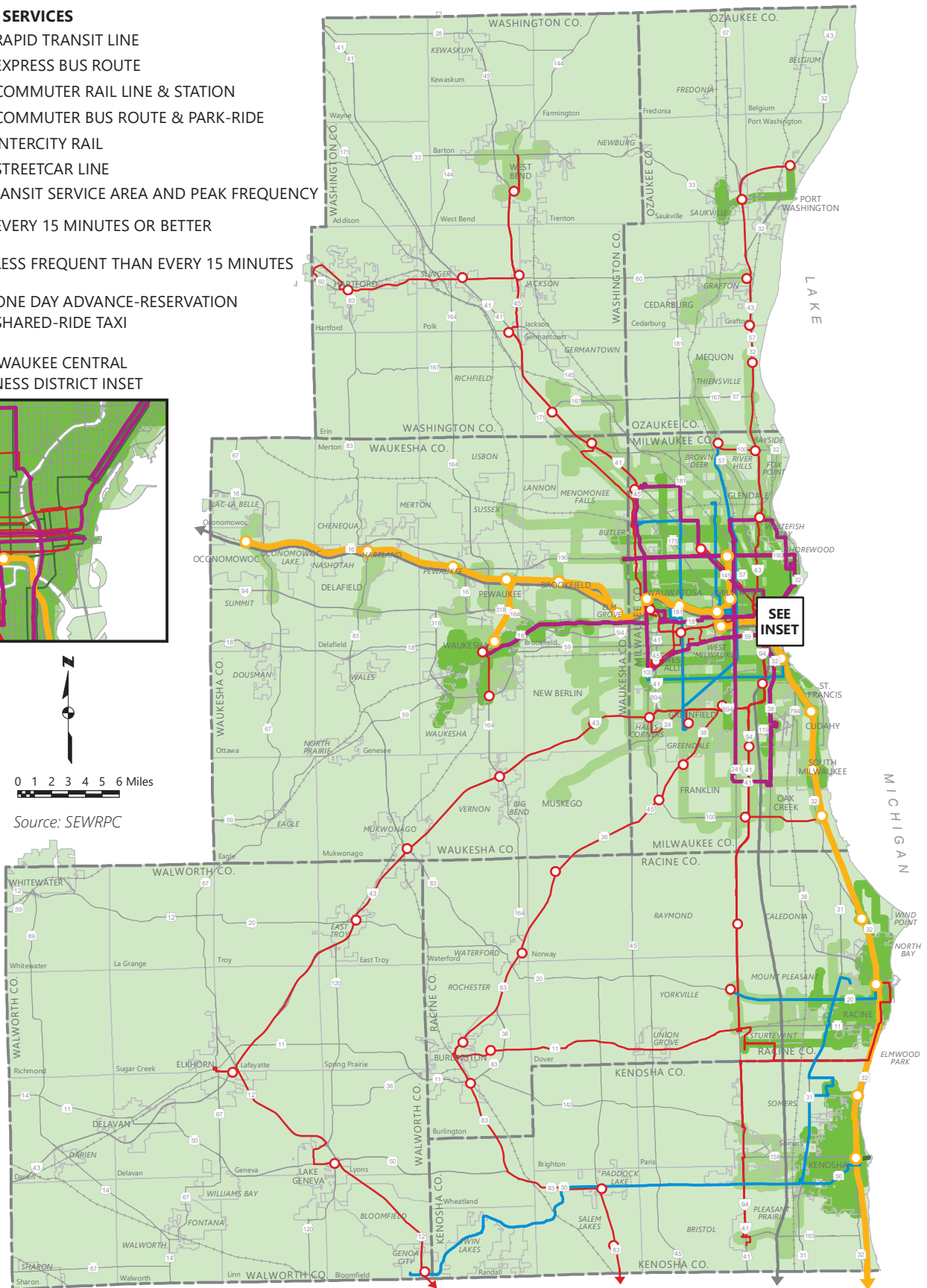
- EVERY 15 MINUTES OR BETTER
- LESS FREQUENT THAN EVERY 15 MINUTES
- ONE DAY ADVANCE-RESERVATION  
SHARED-RIDE TAXI

MILWAUKEE CENTRAL  
 BUSINESS DISTRICT INSET



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Miles

Source: SEWRPC



9/2024

element from VISION 2050. Specific transit recommendations in VISION 2050, which are described in more detail below, include developing rapid transit, improving and developing commuter rail corridors, and expanding local bus service to suburban job centers. These additional VISION 2050 recommendations can be considered within the context of the transit planning process to provide service that is time-competitive with a car and provide those without a car access to jobs, education, and other daily needs.

The specific recommendations in the regional plan that pertain to transit services provided by Kenosha Area Transit include the following:

- Implement programs to improve access to suburban employment centers; enhancing stops, stations, and park-ride facilities with state-of-the-art amenities; implementing “transit first” designs on urban streets; permitting buses to travel on highway shoulders; and implementing a universal fare system and free transfers across all transit operators.
- Develop commuter rail corridors and significantly improve and expand existing commuter bus services. Both commuter rail and bus services would provide frequent service, with service every 15 minutes in the peak in both directions and every 30 to 60 minutes in both directions at other times. The recommended commuter rail line would connect Kenosha, Racine, continue north to Milwaukee County, and communities in between by making upgrades to existing freight rail corridors to allow passenger rail at speeds up to 79 miles per hour, providing a fast service connecting many of the larger population centers in the Region. Stops would be located in the City of Kenosha. Commuter bus services—one along IH 94 connecting with Racine and Milwaukee Counties to the north and a second service in western Kenosha County on STH 83 connecting to Burlington in Racine County—connecting to the recommended express route which would run east and west throughout Kenosha County.
- Develop express bus service to travel from Genoa City to the Metra Station in Kenosha County and service to connect the western part of the City of Racine to the western part of the City of Kenosha. Stops would be spaced at least one-half mile apart, and therefore the services would provide better travel times than local bus routes. Services would come every 15 minutes during the peak and every 30 minutes at other times.

- Improve the frequency of local transit service in corridors and areas not served by rapid and express service. This improved service would provide extended weekday and weekend service from 5:00 a.m. to 12:00 a.m.
- Expand local transit service to suburban employment centers, by providing new services to connect businesses and residents to nearby commuter and rapid services. This service can take the form of local fixed-or flexible bus routes, demand-responsive shuttles or vans, or partnerships with private transportation providers.

This route analysis and short-range service planning study is considered an initial stage of implementation of the adopted regional plan, as it will refine and detail VISION 2050's transit recommendations. These recommendations provide the basis for potential options to consider during the planning process such as initiating new transit services, modifying existing services, and programming transit projects in future budgets. The report will propose a range of recommended service changes for the transit system and identify the forecasted operating expenses and service levels that would be expected from implementing the changes.

This route review and update for Kenosha Area Transit will be documented in the following chapters of this report:

- Chapter 2, "Existing Transit Services and Travel Patterns," which describes the existing public transit systems, the travel patterns of existing ridership, and a summary of other major transit services presently available in the City
- Chapter 3, "Evaluation of the Existing Transit System," which describes how well the existing services provided by Kenosha Area Transit meets selected performance standards, thereby identifying service-related problems, successes, and deficiencies
- Chapter 4, "Recommended Transit Services," which sets forth a description of the transit service changes that have been considered and recommended by Kenosha Area Transit, the Transit Commission, and the project's Working Group