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RACINE COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN: 2012-2016

Draft Outline (REVISED)

CHAPTER VI: TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ALTERNATIVES

I. INTRODUCTION

II. RACINE BELLE URBAN SYSTEM (BUS) DESIRABLE ALTERNATIVE

A. Introduction

The evaluation in Chapter V found that BUS had good systemwide performance and that most of its routes were operating with acceptable performance levels. This Alternative would only make changes to improve efficiency and to address some of the unmet needs identified in the evaluation and the public comments.

B. Service Improvements under Desirable Alternative

1. Changes to route alignments to eliminate unproductive route segments and duplication of service along routes. Route Nos. 5, 20, 27, and 86 in particular merit further review for route and service changes. Specific changes that should be considered include:
 - a. Eliminate Route No. 27 and combine it with Route No. 20 to make it a regular route, with express service in the morning and afternoon peak periods;
 - b. Consider how to provide service to major activity centers in the Villages of Mount Pleasant and Sturtevant, including the new Mount Pleasant Village Campus and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections Racine Correctional Institution.
 - c. Replace the circular Route No. 86 with a new route, maintaining service to the hospital. Or, establish counterclockwise service on Route No. 86 to supplement current clockwise service
- “Brainstorming ideas” that came up in conversation with BUS staff include:
- d. Combine Route Nos. 5 and 86;

- e. Consider alternative route for segment of Route No. 7 operating over Grand Ave. between Washington Ave. and 21st St.;
2. Use savings from route realignments to increase midday service by reducing the number of routes operating with the current alternating 30 and 60 minute headways during the midday period on weekdays.
 - a. This improvement may require a new route structure for the south side of the City, focusing on a transfer center at or near the Regency Mall Shopping Center.
3. Identify the costs of providing service to major activity centers in the Villages of Mount Pleasant and Sturtevant.
 - a. The portion of Route Nos. 20 and 27 within the Village of Sturtevant are funded by TID #3. One issue to explore is whether the Village of Sturtevant could continue to fund BUS service if it were extended beyond TID #3 to serve the Racine Correctional Institution. Another issue is that the TID funds are scheduled to expire in 2015, and the Village of Sturtevant has given initial indication that when those funds expire, BUS service to the TID will no longer be funded.

C. Additional Non-Service Improvements under Desirable Alternative

1. Explore possible changes in fare structure, such as implementing an all-day pass, increasing the regular adult fare from \$1.50 to \$2.00, eliminating the \$0.25 discount for evenings (Monday through Saturday, 7:00 pm to close), modifying the 30-day pass to a monthly pass.
2. Improvements to operating efficiency, including potentially reducing the layover times (15-30 minutes) during weekends, and reducing driver overtime hours (currently equal to 40 hours a month) through more efficient run-cutting.

III. RACINE BUS FINANCIALLY-CONSTRAINED ALTERNATIVE

A. Discussion of financial constraints.

Background to design of Alternative: implications for Federal, State, and local funding of proposed ten percent reduction in State operating assistance for calendar year 2012.

1. Federal and State funding reduced to 50 percent of operating expenses.
2. Local funding not to increase by more than one percent.

B. Service Changes under Financially Constrained Alternative

Assumes the service improvements under the “Desirable Alternative” will be scaled back as needed to be within available funding levels. Potential changes could include:

1. Elimination of unproductive route segments or entire routes including Route Nos. 5, 20, 27, and 86;
2. Elimination of service during low ridership periods including late evenings and Sundays;
3. Reducing service frequency to 60 minutes during low ridership periods; and
4. Scaling back paratransit service levels to match changes in bus service. Some other paratransit policies may also need to be changed, including:
 - a. Require neighboring communities to fund the complementary paratransit rides in their community.
 - b. Change service from door-to-door to curb-to-curb. The ADA paratransit regulations only require “origin to destination service”, which includes curb-to-curb service (U.S. DOT requires transit agencies with curb-to-curb service to still provide assistance to riders who need it due to a disability [49 C.F.R. § 37.129(a) and 49 C.F.R. Part 37, App. D, § 37.129].)¹;
 - c. Limit paratransit service to only the hours that fixed-route bus service is offered (currently, DART does provide dialysis trips at 5:00 a.m., before the fixed-route service starts at 5:30 a.m.) [49 C.F.R. § 37.131(4)(e)].

Services that should be retained if Federal, State, and local funding levels are greater than envisioned under this alternative will be identified.

¹ *Origin to Destination Service*, Disability Law Guidance, U.S. Department of Transportation, September 1, 2005, available at www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/ada/civil_rights_3891.html.

IV. TRANSIT SERVICE ALTERNATIVES FOR WESTERN RACINE COUNTY

A. Introduction

For the portions of western Racine County not currently served by public transit, areas with a moderate-to-high transit need, and with the best potential to support some form of public transit service, were identified in the Burlington-Rochester-Waterford and Union Grove areas. Outside of these areas, public comments indicated there was a need for a transportation service that can accommodate last-minute “crisis” transportation requests that are not medical-related. Support was voiced for a public demand-responsive service like a shared-ride taxi.

B. Alternative Service Options

The alternative services that will be considered include:

1. Expansion and Coordination of Existing Services

Under this alternative, County agencies and private non-profit agencies providing transportation services would coordinate to provide service that could be used by the general public. This could entail expanding the eligibility of the specialized transportation service for transportation handicapped persons provided by the Racine County Human Services Department to include the general public when space is available on the service. Similarly, Shuttling People Around Racine County (SPARC) could be expanded to serve the general public. Methods to encourage the expansion of the Racine County Independent Transportation Network (ITN) for seniors to include the general public will be explored. Walworth County’s transportation services for the elderly, disabled, and consumers of County public assistance programs will serve as one model for this alternative.

Kenosha County’s coordination between the County Health and Human Services Department and the Kenosha Area Transit System to provide transportation in coordination with the City’s paratransit service will serve as another model for this alternative. This section will include a discussion of the County’s human services transportation and the City’s Dial-A-Ride Transportation.

2. Shared-Ride Taxi: The potential for establishing a taxi system serving areas in western Racine County will be considered. The service would require an advance reservation, and could operate as a subscription service during peak periods. Shared-ride taxis can stop to pick up or drop off passengers with different trip destinations. Both Washington and Ozaukee Counties operate shared-ride taxi services essentially countywide; their systems could to some extent be used as models for the creation and operation of the taxi service.

3. Flex-Route, Fixed Schedule: A flexibly routed service would be explored for travel between eastern and western Racine County. Under this alternative, transit vehicles would stop at scheduled checkpoints along a route, but would leave and return to the route to pick up and drop off passengers within a limited geographic area, or “corridor”, along the route. Passengers would need to call in advance for a route deviation. Otherwise, they could board the bus at the scheduled checkpoint stops. This service could be considered to provide regular service between the City of Racine and employers in the Burlington-Rochester-Waterford and Union Grove areas

V. TRANSIT SERVICES ALTERNATIVES FOR CONNECTING TO ADJACENT COUNTIES

A. Introduction

Unmet needs were identified for transit services between the City of Racine and the University of Wisconsin-Parkside and the City of Kenosha, and between the Burlington-Rochester-Waterford and Union Grove areas and Milwaukee County.

B. Alternative Service Options

The alternative services that will be considered include:

1. Reestablish Local Bus Service between Racine and UW-Parkside

This service would involve reestablishing local bus service between downtown Racine and UW-Parkside following the former alignment of BUS Route No. 9.

2. Establish Express Bus Service between Racine and Kenosha

This service would involve establishing express bus service between downtown Racine and downtown Kenosha. Alternative alignments that will be reviewed include over STH 32, over STH 31, and through UW-Parkside.

3. Establish Express Bus Service between Burlington and Milwaukee

This service would involve establishing an express bus service between downtown Burlington and downtown Milwaukee over STH 36 and IH 43. The service would likely be commuter-oriented, and stops to serve major employers and medical centers in southern Milwaukee County will be explored.

4. Improve Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines Service

Coach USA/Wisconsin Coach Lines currently operates eight trips in each direction on weekdays and six trips in each direction on weekends and holidays between Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee. The improvements would involve increasing frequency on the current service, particularly in mid-afternoon, and exploring new stop locations. The method for contracting for the service will also be investigated.

VI. SUMMARY