

With all the facts and figures published about our local transit system, it is necessary to review all claims with a critical eye and be certain of the facts. Unfortunately, the misinformation surrounding the proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail line and Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) is inaccurate and paints a false picture of the benefits a commuter rail system and regional transit in southeastern Wisconsin will provide.

MYTH VS. FACT

Myth: The KRM costs too much.

Fact:

- The local share of the capital costs of the KRM project is expected to be \$35-40 million – roughly 15-17% of the total capital costs - (2009 dollars), shared among Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee Counties.
 - Capital Cost - \$232.7 million (2009 dollars)
 - \$140 million Federal discretionary grant (FTA), about 60% of total capital cost
 - \$18 million FHWA CMAQ grants, about 7% of total capital cost
 - \$35 – 40 million State share, about 17% of total capital cost
 - \$35 – 40 million Local share, about 17% of total capital cost (divided among Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha)
- The local share of the annual operating cost of the KRM project is expected to be \$1.6 million – roughly 12% of the total operating costs - (2009 dollars), shared among Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee Counties.
 - Annual Operating Cost - \$13.4 million (2009 dollars)
 - \$4.1 million fare revenue
 - \$5.4 million State assistance
 - \$2.3 million Federal assistance
 - \$1.6 million Local share

(Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC))

Myth: Buses can do everything the KRM can do- and better.

Fact:

- Buses are a key consideration in any transit planning, as they provide the backbone of any transit infrastructure. However, in the case of the Chicago to Milwaukee Corridor, various studies proved a commuter rail system to be the **best** option
- KRM is selected as the preferred alternative to BRT because it:
 - Is much faster than bus in connecting the Kenosha, Milwaukee and Racine to each other and with Northeastern Illinois;
 - Provides the highest level of reliability;
 - Is expected to attract more than twice the ridership of bus options;
 - Has a substantially greater impact on highway system traffic and traffic congestion;
 - Provides a far superior alternative mode of travel during the I-94 reconstruction over the next 20 years; and;
 - Contributes to a greater reduction in vehicle generated air pollutant emissions and vehicle energy consumption in proportion to its potential to attract greater transit ridership, longer trips by transit and new transit trips.

(Sources: Intergovernmental Partnership of the cities and counties of Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee (IGP), Wisconsin Department of Transportation (Wis-DOT) and Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC).)

Myth: Unlike buses, the KRM is inflexible and permanent.

Fact:

- The current KRM structure is a starting point, the RTA 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.
- The permanency of the route is an advantage to bus transit, because it holds greater potential to attract transit-oriented development around stations.
- Communities around the nation are encouraging residential and commercial development near public transit.
- Transit-oriented development brings housing, shopping, educational institutions, and working opportunities within walking distance of a transportation hub, specifically:
 - In Arlington, VA, development in two Metrorail corridors is concentrated on 6% of the land in the county but produces almost half the county's tax revenue;
 - The city of Dallas had \$3 billion in transit-oriented development (TOD) projects in 2005. By 2008, it was \$7 billion—associated with an additional \$78 billion in tax revenues;
 - In Charlotte, NC, there is \$1.8 billion in projected TOD investment, expected to produce an additional \$24.1 million annually in tax revenue; and
 - In San Diego, TOD has meant that retail property values have increased 167% within 200 feet of the trolley station.

(Source: APTA "Public Transportation: Moving America Forward," 2010.)

Myth: The KRM is an inefficient way to get from Milwaukee or Racine to Chicago

Fact:

- The KRM is a commuter rail and thus has additional stops for the added convenience of many riders stopping at numerous locations on the line, it is not solely a connection to Chicago.
- Potential one way fares on the Milwaukee-Chicago line range from \$1.80 - \$8.20. The same ride on the Hiawatha currently costs \$22.00.

Myth: The KRM's job creation and economic development claims are overblown.

Fact:

- The KRM will meet a critical need identified by local businesses – providing a reliable, affordable link between jobs and a large and talented regional workforce, including the 21% of households without cars within 1/2 mile of stations. Specifically, the KRM will:
 - Connect to nearly 1 million jobs currently existing within 1 mile of stations between Milwaukee and Chicago.
 - Link to new jobs currently projected within the corridor, including a projected 359,000 jobs and 525,000 in population within 3 miles of Wisconsin stations.
 - Support and assist in bringing about 71,000 jobs through transit-oriented development. (Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC))
- Across the country, cities are pointing to astronomical development successes with rail.
 - In Charlotte, transit officials claim that more than \$291 million in new development has been built near stations on a new 10-mile rail line that opened last year. They say an additional \$1.6 billion has been announced for the rail corridor. (Source: UNC Charlotte's Center for Transportation Studies. Reconnecting America. April 2007)
 - In Denver, transit officials say 8.4 million square feet of new retail, office and government space has been built along its existing 35-mile rail network. There have been 11,000 residential units built near the rail line. (Source: Sirois, William. "The Fate of FasTracks." In Transit. Fall 2009, pp. 5)
 - In Dallas, a 2005 study showed that \$3.3 billion in new real estate investment was made or planned near light-rail stations from 1999 to 2005. (Source: Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART))
 - A University of North Texas study projected the new development would add up to \$78 million annually in new property taxes. The study also showed that homes near rail stations increased in value 39% more than homes not served by light rail.

Myth: The KRM's cost is likely underestimated and ridership overestimated.

Fact:

- KRM ridership projections were developed in concert with FTA experts, using the same methodologies used for successful commuter rail systems in cities like Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, Denver and Portland. (Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC))

Myth: The KRM cannot compete with cars.

Fact:

- The KRM commuter rail trip times are similar to or better than driving during peak travel times. Examples of potential trip times are:
- Overall, starting in Kenosha and stopping at each proposed station along the way to Milwaukee will take an average of 53 minutes. Specifically:
 - Kenosha Metra to Somers will take 5 minutes
 - Somers to Racine Transit Center will take 9 minutes
 - Racine Transit Center to Caledonia will take 6 minutes
 - Caledonia to Oak Creek will take 8 minutes
 - Oak Creek to South Milwaukee will take 5 minutes
 - South Milwaukee to Cudahy/St. Francis will take 5 minutes
 - Cudahy/St. Francis to South Side Milwaukee will take 7 minutes
 - South Side Milwaukee to Milwaukee Intermodal Station will take 8 minutes
- Reliability is an important benefit of commuter rail. Because trains operate on their own right-of-way, they avoid traffic congestion, accidents, construction and weather delays. Train commuting is more reliable than other modes of regional travel.
- With the reconstruction of I-94 (from the IL state line to Mitchell International Airport) beginning this year and continuing over the next decade, the KRM commuter rail will be a hassle free way to avoid the delays and congestion caused by construction.

(Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC))

Myth: Federal and state deficits are huge, social security and healthcares costs are skyrocketing; this is not the time to add new, permanent and structural taxpayer costs.

Fact:

- Wisconsin has never secured a cent of the billions of dollars in Federal New Starts grants given away each year on transit projects. While cities like Seattle, Minneapolis and St. Louis are reaping the benefits of this federal program, Wisconsin receives nothing.
- The dedicated sales tax for transit is ensuring property tax relief and allowing those outside of the tri-county area to pay into funding the regional transit system, an estimated 30% of revenue from the sales tax will come from people who live outside of the tri-county region.