

## *Light Rail and Commuter Rail*

*Compiled by Arden Rice, September 2007*

[www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/pubs/tapthepower.htm](http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/pubs/tapthepower.htm)

Public rail transit is gaining renewed interest in response to rising fuel costs, traffic congestion, and increasing urban development. Several commuter rail and light rail projects have been proposed for Dane County and southeastern Wisconsin in recent years. Commuter rail is characterized by electric or diesel operated passenger trains operating between cities and surrounding suburbs. Light rail systems (also referred to as streetcars or trolleys) operate within cities, making frequent stops, and use passenger cars on fixed rails powered by overhead electric lines. Advocates and opponents of rail transit hold deeply divided views on the costs and benefits of rail service in terms of construction and operating costs, environmental and economic impacts on surrounding land, ridership rates, and energy efficiency.

***Community Economic Impact Study of the Proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) Commuter Rail / UW-Milwaukee, Institute for Survey and Policy Research. 2007. (385.3/W7b1)*** [www.sewisrta.org/pdfs/Community\\_economic\\_impact.pdf](http://www.sewisrta.org/pdfs/Community_economic_impact.pdf)

***Commuter Rail: Commuter Rail Issues Should Be Considered in Debate over Amtrak / U.S. Government Accountability Office. 2006. (GAO-06-470) (385.3/X10)*** This report considers the impact on local commuter rail services, many of which utilize Amtrak's infrastructure and personnel to operate, if Amtrak were to cease operations. [www.gao.gov/new.items/d06470.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d06470.pdf)

***Commuter Rail: Information and Guidance Could Help Facilitate Commuter and Freight Rail Access Negotiations / U.S. General Accounting Office. 2004. (GAO-04-240) (385.1/X4)*** One of the obstacles to instituting commuter rail services is negotiating service and liability agreements with the freight rail companies that often own the rail corridors. This report discusses whether the federal government should offer information and advice to mediate these negotiations. [www.gao.gov/new.items/d04240.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04240.pdf)

***Dane County Committee to Evaluate Commuter Rail Implementation: Report of Results and Recommendations to the Dane County Board of Supervisors. 1996. (385.3/D19a)*** Executive summary online at: [www.co.dane.wi.us/rail/report/railexec.htm](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/rail/report/railexec.htm)

***Dane County Commuter Rail Feasibility Study: Phase 1 Report / Wisconsin Department of Transportation, County of Dane, and City of Madison. 1998. (385.3/W7a6)*** [www.co.dane.wi.us/rail/crfs/final/html](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/rail/crfs/final/html)

***Evaluating Rail Transit Criticism / Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute. 2007. (385.3/V66a)*** This report addresses criticism of the cost and efficiency of rail transit and analyzes data presented by critics such as Randal O'Toole, Castelazo and Garrett, and Wendell Cox. [www.vtpi.org/railcrit.pdf](http://www.vtpi.org/railcrit.pdf)

***Feasibility Study of Commuter Railway Passenger Train Service in the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Corridor / Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. 1998. (Community Assistance Planning Report no. 239) (385.3/So811a)*** [www.sewrpc.org/publications/capr/capr-239\\_feasibility\\_study\\_krm.pdf](http://www.sewrpc.org/publications/capr/capr-239_feasibility_study_krm.pdf)

***Great Rail Disasters: The Impact of Rail Transit on Urban Livability / Randal O'Toole, Center for the American Dream. 2004. (385.3/Ot6)*** <http://americandreamcoalition.org/1-2004.pdf>

***Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Corridor Transit Study Summary Report and Recommended Plan / Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. 2003. (Community Assistance Planning Report no. 276) (388/So84)*** [www.sewrpc.org/publications/capr/capr-276\\_krm\\_transit\\_study.pdf](http://www.sewrpc.org/publications/capr/capr-276_krm_transit_study.pdf)

***Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Extension Project (DOT - Local Transportation Assistance) / Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau. 2007. (Joint Committee on Finance Budget Issue Paper #777) (LFB/b/2007-09/no.777) (library use only)*** [www.legis.wi.gov/lfb/2007-09budget/Budget%20Papers/777.pdf](http://www.legis.wi.gov/lfb/2007-09budget/Budget%20Papers/777.pdf)

***Light Rail in Milwaukee / Wendell Cox, Wisconsin Policy Research Institute. March 1998. (WPRI Report, v. 11, no. 3) (385.3/W75)*** A well-known critic of rail transit assesses the impact of light and commuter rail in similar urban regions around the nation. [www.wpri.org/Reports/Volume11/Vol11no3.pdf](http://www.wpri.org/Reports/Volume11/Vol11no3.pdf)

***Making Transit Work: Insights from Western Europe, Canada, and the United States / National Research Council Transportation Research Board. 2001. (Special Report no. 257)*** <http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/sr/sr257.pdf>

***Mass Transit: Bus Rapid Transit Shows Promise / U.S. General Accounting Office. 2001. (GAO-01-984) (388/X19)*** Compares the costs of building and operating express bus rapid transit versus light rail in a number of communities around the nation. [www.gao.gov/new.items/d01984.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d01984.pdf)

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## *Light Rail and Commuter Rail* Continued

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*Metro 2020 Final Report: Transportation Strategies for Milwaukee and Southeast Wisconsin* / Metro 2020 Policy Board. 1991. (388/W7d1/pt.1) [www.sewisrta.org/pdfs/metro\\_2020.pdf](http://www.sewisrta.org/pdfs/metro_2020.pdf)

*Passenger Rail Security: Federal Strategy and Enhanced Coordination Needed to Prioritize and Guide Security Efforts* / U.S. Government Accountability Office. 2007. (GAO-07-583T) (385.9/X5) Evaluates the progress made by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to complete a risk assessment of the nation's passenger rail services and make priorities in instituting new security measures. [www.gao.gov/new.items/d07583t.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07583t.pdf)

*Passenger Rail Security: Overview of Issues* / Congressional Research Service. 2006. (CRS Report for Congress RL32625) (385.9/X4) This report addresses rail transit recommendations raised by the 9/11 Commission. It also summarizes related federal legislative initiatives in the 109th Congress. <http://digital.library.unt.edu/govdocs/crs/permalink/meta-crs-9790:1>

*Public Transportation: Future Demand Is Likely for New Starts and Small Starts Programs, but Improvements Needed to the Small Starts Application Process* / U.S. Government Accountability Office. 2007. (GAO-07-917) (385.6/X8) Reviews how the Federal Transit Administration awards funding to state and local governments for transit projects through their New Starts and Small Starts grant programs. [www.gao.gov/new.items/d07917.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d07917.pdf)

*Rail Disasters 2005: The Impact of Rail Transit on Transit Ridership – An Update to Great Rail Disasters* / Randal O'Toole, American Dream Coalition. 2005. (385.3/Ot6a) <http://americandreamcoalition.org/RD2005.pdf>

*Rail Transit in America: A Comprehensive Evaluation of Benefits* / Todd Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute. 2006. (385.3/V66) [www.vtpi.org/railben.pdf](http://www.vtpi.org/railben.pdf)

*Transit Corridor Study: Feasibility Analysis of Light Rail and Improved Bus Services – Phase I Report* / prepared for Madison Metro Transit System by Cambridge Systematics. 1992. (388/M26e)

*Urban Rail Transit* / Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau. 1998. (Informational Bulletin 98-6) (385.3/W7d) Gives an overview of urban rail options under consideration in Wisconsin metropolitan areas, describes the history of such proposals, and summarizes similar project in other communities in North America. [www.legis.wi.gov/lrb/pubs/ib/98ib6.pdf](http://www.legis.wi.gov/lrb/pubs/ib/98ib6.pdf)

*Walworth-Fox Lake Corridor Commuter Rail and Bus Service Feasibility Study* / Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. 2001. (Community Assistance Planning Report no. 240) (SEWRPC/c/no.240) (library use only)

*Wisconsin Rail Issues and Opportunities Report* / Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Division of Investment Management, Bureau of Planning. 2004. (385.1/W7c) [www.dot.wi.gov/projects/state/rail-issues.htm](http://www.dot.wi.gov/projects/state/rail-issues.htm)

### Related Web Sites

**American Public Transport Association (APTA) – All About Rail:** [www.apta.com/railstation.cfm](http://www.apta.com/railstation.cfm)

**APTA Public Transportation Fact Book:** [www.apta.com/research/stats/factbook/index.cfm](http://www.apta.com/research/stats/factbook/index.cfm)

**Center for Transportation Excellence:** [www.cfte.org](http://www.cfte.org)  
News about transit projects, ballot measures, state-by-state facts, resources, and policy analysis.

**Dane Alliance for Rail Transit:**  
<http://danerail.squarespace.com>

**DOT University Transportation Research Centers:**  
<http://utc.dot.gov> Policy and technical reports on all aspects of transportation and transit.

**Light Rail Now!:** [www.lightrailnow.org](http://www.lightrailnow.org)

**National Transit Database – Annual Data Publications:**  
[www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/pubs.htm](http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/pubs.htm) Statistics on costs, revenues and ridership rates for all forms of transit.

**Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission – Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail Link:**  
[www.sewrpc.org/krmonline/publicinvolvement.shtm](http://www.sewrpc.org/krmonline/publicinvolvement.shtm)  
Reports on this site describing the current phase of this project update earlier Community Assistance Planning Reports no. 239 and no. 276 referenced above.

**State Legislative Developments Related to Amtrak and Passenger Rail Issues (2001):**  
[www.ncsl.org/programs/transportation/amtrakrpt1101.htm](http://www.ncsl.org/programs/transportation/amtrakrpt1101.htm)  
Most legislation cited is for high-speed rail, but some initiatives include commuter and light rail too.

**Urban Transport Fact Book:** [www.publicpurpose.com/ut-index.htm](http://www.publicpurpose.com/ut-index.htm) Data compiled by Wendell Cox Consultancy, a well-known critic of smart growth and public transit.

**Transit Now! – Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Rail:**  
[www.transitnow.org/KRM.html](http://www.transitnow.org/KRM.html)

**TRIS Online Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) bibliographic database:** <http://ntlsearch.bts.gov/tris/index.do> A collaborative effort by the National Academies' Transportation Research Board, and the U.S. DOT's National Transportation Library.

**Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation Rail Projects, Plans and Studies:** [www.dot.wi.gov/projects/rail.htm](http://www.dot.wi.gov/projects/rail.htm) Includes the proposed high speed rail project between Madison and Milwaukee.

**Clippings:** (Library use only)

- Metropolitan transportation – Milwaukee area: 388/M64Z
  - Metropolitan transportation: 388/W7z (WI); 388/Z (U.S.)
  - Railroads – Passenger service: 385.3/Z
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