

May 2014

The (Rail)Road Not Traveled: the Failure of the KRM Commuter Rail Proposal in Greater Milwaukee, Wi

Neal A. Johnson

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.uwm.edu/etd>



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#), and the [Transportation Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Johnson, Neal A., "The (Rail)Road Not Traveled: the Failure of the KRM Commuter Rail Proposal in Greater Milwaukee, Wi" (2014). *Theses and Dissertations*. 407.
<https://dc.uwm.edu/etd/407>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by UWM Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of UWM Digital Commons. For more information, please contact open-access@uwm.edu.

THE (RAIL)ROAD NOT TRAVELED:
THE FAILURE OF THE KRM COMMUTER RAIL PROPOSAL
IN GREATER MILWAUKEE, WI

by

Neal A. Johnson

A Thesis Submitted in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science

in Urban Studies

at

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

May 2014

ABSTRACT
THE (RAIL)ROAD NOT TRAVELED:
THE FAILURE OF THE KRM COMMUTER RAIL PROPOSAL IN GREATER
MILWAUKEE, WI

by
Neal A. Johnson

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, 2014
Under the Supervision of Dr. Linda M. McCarthy

The Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail (KRM) proposal was one of many passenger rail proposals studied for the greater Milwaukee area over the past few decades. The proposed line would have connected the cities of Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee, as well as communities in northern Illinois, along already existing rail lines. An analysis of archival information, newspaper coverage, and interviews with key stakeholders were conducted to explore the influence of an auto-dominated culture, the role of politics, local and regional expectations, funding issues, and the legacy of earlier local debates to determine why the KRM commuter rail proposal failed. In the beginning, the KRM proposal garnered overwhelming public and political support and was expected to drive economic development and regional transit cooperation. However, soon the tone changed and the KRM proposal was dead before it ever left the station. And while the failure of the KRM proposal can officially be blamed on conservative political leaders, a deeper analysis reveals that the KRM proposal's failure can be also be traced to the personal agendas of political leaders on both side of the aisle. This exploration into why the KRM commuter rail proposal failed will provide lessons learned for future Milwaukee proposals and new rail transit proposals throughout the country.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Context and Background of Case Study.....	2
The Role of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission.....	2
KRM Background.....	3
Literature Review.....	7
1. The Impact of the Automobile.....	10
2. The Role of Politics.....	13
3. Local and Regional Expectations of Commuter Rail.....	17
4. Local, State and Federal Funding Issues.....	22
5. The Legacy of Earlier Local Debates.....	24
Research Questions.....	26
Methodology.....	27
Findings and Analysis.....	29
1. Automobile Culture and the KRM.....	29
2. Politics of KRM.....	34
3. Expectations of KRM.....	46
4. Funding Issues for KRM.....	59
5. KRM and the Light Rail Debate.....	65
Conclusion.....	69
Lessons Learned.....	70
Further Research.....	72
References.....	74
Appendix (Interview Questions).....	84

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FTA - Federal Transit Administration

ICE - Interstate Cost Estimate

IGA - Inter-governmental Agency

ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act

KRM - Kenosha, Racine, Milwaukee commuter rail

MCTS - Milwaukee County Transit System

RTA - Regional Transit Authority

SEWRPC - Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

SERTA - Southeast Regional Transit Authority

WisDOT - Wisconsin Department of Transportation

Introduction

Over the past few decades, passenger rail has been the focus of much attention in greater Milwaukee. Aiming to increase mobility for area residents, the greater Milwaukee area has seen numerous passenger rail initiatives introduced during this time. Perhaps most well-known is the East-West Corridor study from the 1990s that looked at the possibility of light rail for Milwaukee, which has now dwindled down to the current debate over a 1.9 mile streetcar line in downtown Milwaukee. Similarly, the State of Wisconsin started work on a proposed high speed rail line that would have connected Chicago and Minneapolis-St. Paul through Wisconsin's two largest cities, Milwaukee and Madison. There have also been proposals for commuter rail projects such as the KRM commuter rail line from Kenosha to downtown Milwaukee. However, none of these proposals have yet to come to fruition.

Within this larger context of passenger rail, I specifically focus on the KRM commuter rail proposal. The case of KRM is an important study because while the service would have connected Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha as well as the Greater Chicago area, it could also be considered part of a larger regional rail system serving Southeast Wisconsin and Northeast Illinois. Thus it serves more than just the suburban commuter but the mobility needs of the entire region, connecting communities through an integrated regional system.

The term commuter rail refers to rush-hour services at the beginning and end of the day and is commonly seen as a preferred option for bringing suburban commuters into the central city (Cervero, 1998; Richmond, 2001). More broadly, commuter rail can also serve shoppers, students, and visitors, which is why it is also sometimes referred to

as regional rail (Grava, 2003). Commuter rail and regional rail both refer to passenger rail service that covers a large metropolitan area that is run by self-propelled locomotives, usually on existing rights-of-way.

This paper looks at the KRM commuter rail proposal to discern the reasons for its failure. It begins with background on the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) and the KRM proposal, followed by a review of the academic and public policy literature on passenger rail, research questions, and methodology. The findings of the paper are in five sections: automobile culture and the KRM; the politics of KRM; the expectations of KRM; funding issues for KRM; and KRM and the light rail debate. The paper closes with conclusions, lessons learned, and further research.

Context and Background of Case Study

The Role of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

In order to understand the debate about passenger rail in Wisconsin, an introduction to SEWRPC is necessary. What follows is a brief history and introductory background of SEWRPC, including how and why the commission was formed and the function it serves in transportation planning in southeast Wisconsin.

SEWRPC was formed on August 8, 1960 by then-governor Gaylord Nelson (Casey, 1998). SEWRPC covers seven counties in southeast Wisconsin: Kenosha, Walworth, Racine, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington. At formation, this area accounted for about 40% of the state's population but only 5% of its land (Hayes, 2010). From the beginning, the issues of unplanned development and changing regional dynamics were apparent. As Hayes (2010, p.13) described:

The transportation system of streets, roads and highways was hardly a system at all. Transportation planning was uncoordinated and piecemeal, based as much on

local political influence as on real needs of motorists. Thus, a major thoroughfare in Milwaukee might abruptly become a narrow city street as it passed a boundary into a suburb.

Traffic, especially during rush-hours or winter weather, would often cause gridlock for entire neighborhoods. SEWRPC also dealt with other issues in the region, but much of its focus was on development that was sprawling faster than the infrastructure to support it.

The planning process was to be "nonpolitical" and "based on solid planning and engineering data" (Hayes, 2010, p 19). However, Casey (1998, p. 722) argued that the law that created SEWRPC was deficient due to the advisory nature of the commission and its lack of power to implement approved plans. When it came to transportation planning, Hayes (2010, p. 24) described the guidelines as follows:

An individual highway or transit line cannot be planned in isolation. It must be recognized that the total urban transportation network acts as a system . . . Highway and transit systems must be planned together . . . The planning must be metropolitan or regional in scope . . . Transportation planning cannot be separated from land use planning.

Overall, SEWRPC was a commission formed to solve the pressing problems of unplanned development in the region, but was ineffective because it was simply an advisory board and not an implementing agency. It was still up to local governing bodies to implement the recommendations of the commission.

KRM Background

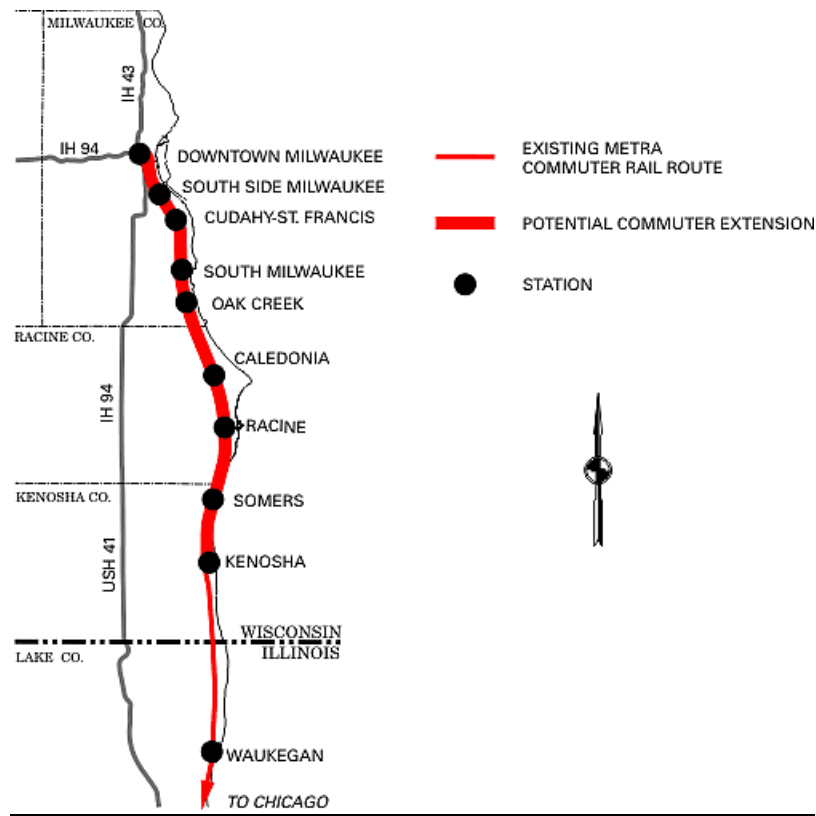
The discussion about passenger rail linking Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha with Northern Illinois and the greater Chicago area has been a topic of debate for decades. A 1993 study looked at several possible routes, but mainly focused on a high-speed rail connection between Chicago and Milwaukee (Envirodyne Engineers, Inc., 1993). A 1998 study then gave rise to the idea of commuter rail connecting Milwaukee,

Racine and Kenosha through the existing Metra system which terminates in Kenosha (Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission [SEWRPC], 1998).

Metra is a commuter rail system serving the seven county Chicagoland area (Metra, 2014). The system serves 241 stations, on nearly 490 route miles, and provides over 80 million passenger trips per year (Metra, 2012). The system is funded through ticket sales and a sales tax in the Illinois counties served (Metra, 2014). The original plans were to have Metra extend their current service to Racine and Milwaukee (Ryan, 2005). However, because of Metra's establishment as an Illinois agency, it was unable to extend service to Milwaukee (Sandler, 2006). In fact, Metra service to Kenosha was paid for by the Union Pacific railroad because of the ease of turning around trains in the already existing facility. Thus the KRM proposal was a southeast Wisconsin issue, and a new agency would be needed to run it. The debate about the proposal continued, and in 2010 the Southeast Regional Transit Authority (SERTA) again asked Metra officials to extend their current service from Kenosha to Milwaukee, but Metra was not interested in extending their service and was still limited as an agency of the state of Illinois (Sandler, 2010a).

The Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail was a proposed 33 mile commuter rail system with nine stops planned (see map on following page) including major stops in Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee (Transit NOW, 2012) with an estimated annual ridership of 1.7 million (Institute for Survey & Policy Research, 2007). The system would have used existing freight railroad tracks with 14 weekday round trips planned (Transit NOW, 2012). Weekend service was also proposed at less frequent intervals. The service was to run on the Union Pacific line near the shore of Lake

Map of proposed KRM commuter rail route.



Source: Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). Retrieved from: <http://maps.sewrpc.org/KRMonline/background.shtm>

Michigan through Racine and Kenosha. As a *Racine Journal Times* editorial described, "KRM would connect a corridor of highly populated areas in the southeastern corner of the state" (2011). This would place the KRM on a different line than the Amtrak Hiawatha service that runs from Milwaukee to Chicago on tracks closer to Interstate 94. The KRM line and Amtrak thus would have served different markets and different purposes; with KRM connecting areas between Milwaukee and Kenosha, and Amtrak's Hiawatha service as a quick connection between Milwaukee and Chicago.

A group of business leaders, elected officials, and pro-transit groups met in early 2005 to discuss the advancement of the KRM proposal. As the non-profit transit group, Transit NOW (n.d.), put it:

On February 25, 2005 the county executives and mayors of Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee, and WisDOT joined in an act of true regional cooperation when they sign[ed] an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) that will act as the management structure for the next steps of the KRM commuter rail Metra extension project.

In July of 2005 a bill was passed by the State Legislature and signed by then-Governor Jim Doyle establishing a temporary regional transit authority for Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee counties (SEWRPC, 2011a). In early 2006 this board of the newly formed Regional Transit Authority (RTA) was complete and consisted of one member from each of the three counties of Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee, one member from the cities of Kenosha and Racine and two members from the City of Milwaukee (Transit NOW, n.d.). The legislature further legitimized the Southeast Regional Transit Authority (SERTA) in the 2009-2011 state budget when it was signed on June 29, 2009, giving them the authority to manage and fund the KRM (Transit NOW, n.d.).

By July of 2007 an alternatives analysis was completed with the help of SEWRPC that considered alternatives including buses only, and different combinations of both bus and rail (SEWRPC, 2011a). The conclusion of the KRM committee was that commuter rail was the preferred alternative. However, Rubin and Poole (2008) from the Reason Foundation argued that the alternatives were not given full consideration and further questioned the economic development forecasts.

Initially, KRM commuter rail "attracted broad support, without the level of opposition that has hampered light rail and electric bus proposals," according to Larry Sandler (2003) of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. This support came from all levels of government with Democratic Governor Jim Doyle making the formation of an RTA (a requirement for KRM to move forward) one of his policy priorities; Democratic Congressional Representative Gwen Moore was also supportive by fighting for the

provision of federal funding for the proposal; Republican Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker was supportive of the concept of commuter rail, mainly because of the RTA concept; at the city level Democratic Racine Mayor John Dickert backed the proposal for its potential to help the struggling economy in the City of Racine, and Democratic Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett was supportive of the proposal and positive about the support from the business community. Further endorsement came from the transit advocacy group Transit NOW and SEWRPC who worked as staff to SERTA, the agency who was to fund and operate the commuter rail service. During the public input period in early 2003, over 1,200 people made favorable comments with only 20 comments showing opposition (Transit NOW, n.d.). As Transit NOW (n.d.) concluded, "The public input illustrated resounding support for KRM commuter rail. Those commenting reported a wide diversity of interest that is uncommonly rare in public projects."

Literature Review

This section begins with a brief discussion of the literature related to commuter rail and passenger rail to provide context and then critically evaluates the literature which identifies a number of research questions that need to be asked.

The following attributes of commuter rail explain why it is often chosen as the way to promote regional transit mobility. First, in many cases commuter rail uses already established rail alignments and rights of way (Cervero, 1998), using existing resources to their maximum potential. Second, safety is considerably higher for commuter rail than automobile travel with a death rate of 0.06 and 0.91 per 100,000,000 passenger miles respectively (Grava, 2003). Third, commuter rail consumes less energy per passenger if the cars are mostly full. Last, commuter rail is often associated with increased land values

in surrounding areas (Cervero and Duncan, 2002) and the potential for transit-oriented development (Transportation Research Board, 2003).

In contrast, there are some reasons to exercise caution. First, flexibility is greatly reduced because as population shifts occur the tracks remain fixed in place (Grava, 2003); this is a common criticism of any rail infrastructure. Second, there is also potential conflict with freight operations, which can slow down commuter service and increase expenses for infrastructure improvements. Third, local residents may be concerned about noise from train whistles or the trains themselves. Fourth, rail infrastructure has been deemed a costly expenditure that has no effect on traffic congestion on local roads or at job creation (Rubin et al., 1999). And last, despite the best efforts of planners to create higher-density living, rail transit does not substantially change the broader land use patterns in the United States (Rubin et al., 1999).

Despite the criticisms, in the past few decades regional rail projects throughout the United States have been gaining attention as a way to provide increased mobility in metropolitan regions. Middleton (2003) discussed a "metropolitan railways renaissance" occurring during the last two decades of the twentieth century in cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington D.C., and Portland. Similarly, recent articles highlighted commuter rail projects in cities such as Fort Worth (Graham, 2013), Houston (Spieler, 2010), and Portland (Bergman et. al, 2011), and the expansion of already popular commuter rail service in Chicago (Bowen, 2008). These projects, especially in places known for freeway building such as Fort Worth and Houston, make it clear that the study of transit systems is important to understand how this shift in priorities is occurring and where it is occurring.

What is missing in this discussion, however, is literature on the failure of proposed transit systems. While it is important to highlight the success of new regional or light rail systems and introduce newly proposed systems to the discussion, it is also crucial to understand why passenger rail systems were not completed. In seeking resources for this paper, I found minimal acknowledgements of passenger rail proposals that have failed. I was introduced to one Graduate thesis about the failure of the light rail proposal in Milwaukee (Lang, 2005). I also found periodical and trade publication acknowledgements of proposed rail systems that failed in Orlando (Peterson, 2009), the Netherlands (Railway Gazette International, 2013), New Mexico (Swartz, 2005), and Australia (Murray, 2010). Academic literature on the failure of passenger rail proposals is lacking and more research into this aspect of passenger rail, I argue, can help transit advocates and policy analysts to not only understand the importance of successful rail transit initiatives, but also learn lessons from the ones that failed despite each proposal having its own specific context. Studying the failure of passenger rail proposals specifically provides a more nuanced view of the factors leading to the demise of passenger rail proposals and can provide further insight into the factors that influence their failure.

Following this general overview of passenger rail, I now turn to a more critical review of the literature that will guide my research on the KRM commuter rail proposal. The literature is divided into five sections corresponding to the five important aspects of the literature on passenger rail: the impact of the automobile, the role of politics, the expectations of commuter rail, funding, and the legacy of earlier local debates.

1. The Impact of the Automobile

Automobile use in the United States has historically far outpaced that of the rest of the world. The United States was the first country to cross the threshold of mass motorization in 1958, at 400 vehicles per 1,000 people; nearly fifteen years before Canada, over twenty years before any European country, and almost thirty years before Japan (Jones, 2008). By 1980 the U.S. was also the first country to arrive at pervasive motorization when the combined share of commuting by walking and transit fell below 10%, and the motorization level reached 685 vehicles per 1,000 people. This is an indication of a society so dominated by the automobile that the level of motorization has changed the scale of communities and the transportation options found in cities and metropolitan areas throughout the United States. As Interrante (1983, p. 100) argued "What began as a vehicle to freedom soon became a necessity."

After World War II, the massive consumption of automobiles and the exodus to the suburbs via new federally subsidized home loans signaled the downturn for rail in many parts of the United States (Alvord, 2000). The American people craved suburban spaces with single-family homes on large lots (Jackson, 1985; McShane, 1994). And as more Americans were able to finance single-family homes in the suburbs, they were also able to afford the costs of owning a personal automobile, making it the dominant transportation mode (Jones, 2008). An unintended consequence of this expansion was the increased necessity of the automobile due to the design and spatial arrangement of communities. Infrastructure to aid the mobility of those using the automobile, especially in urban areas, while initially from state or local funds, eventually came from the federal government most notably with the 1956 Interstate Highway Act (Jones, 2008).

The pre-eminence of the automobile in United States transportation has been well documented (Alvord, 2000; Cervero, 1998; Goddard, 1996; Jackson, 1985, Jones, 2008; McShane, 1994; Perl, 2002; Richmond, 2001). Consequently, competition by the use of the automobile is a large hurdle to overcome when attracting ridership for mass transit (Cervero, 1998; Jones, 2008; Richmond, 2001). As Cameron (1997, p. 67) argued:

In the long run, any reforms that break down the monopoly that the automobile has on mobility, and that increase the diversity of mobility options available, is desirable from an equity and an efficiency standpoint. By eliminating implicit subsidies to the car, efficiency policies have the potential to level the playing field whereby higher-occupancy modes can compete. These modes should not only cost less than the single-occupant car, but they should also result in reduced environmental harm, reduced congestion, and reduced need for costly road expansions that devastate human and wild habitats alike.

Cervero (1998, p. xi) contended that the explanation for the struggle of transit "lies in the fact that its chief competitor - the private automobile - is often grossly underpriced." He showed how large-scale metropolitan railways worked in wealthy Stockholm, Sweden and auto-centric Munich, Germany because of the differences in economic policies regarding the automobile. As Jackson (1985) argued United States governmental policies subsidized not only the building of highways, but also the expansion of growth into undeveloped land outside the city. As a result, the costs of owning and operating a personal automobile in the United States are extremely low in comparison to Europe and other places throughout the world (Jackson, 1985; Transportation Research Board, 2001). In Europe, higher taxes on fuel and ownership as well as restrictive parking policies discourage the private automobile for transportation, while encouraging the use of public transportation. The Transportation Research Board (2001, p. 118) also described how:

Throughout much of the post World War II period, the array of consumer choices available to Western Europeans was limited, not only because of public policies, but also because of economic conditions. Few Western Europeans had sufficient income to buy their own home, much less a single-family house on a large lot outside the city.

This brings into question the role of the federal government in transportation.

While the U.S Department of Transportation (2005) argued that its focus is on "transportation issues of national significance" this broad statement does not clearly define the federal government's role in transportation. As the Bipartisan Policy Center (2011, p. 9) argued, "the federal surface transportation program has not had a focused purpose or defined objectives since the completion of the Interstate Highway System." And perhaps it is this ambiguity of new goals and the legacy of past objectives that has left transit in a subservient role to highways in the eyes of the federal government.

While this literature discusses the history of the automobile in the United States and explains the transportation reality in most of its metropolitan areas, it does not adequately explore the individual level transportation choices made by people in their everyday lives. Blainey et al. (2012) explore this phenomenon enumerating 37 barriers to choosing passenger rail over other modes of transportation. Now, despite the fact that this study took place in the United Kingdom and the fact that my study does not focus on individual transportation choices, this study is important to understanding the larger context of automobile dominance. Most pertinent to this discussion was their examination of car dependence. In the article they discussed two forms of car dependence; structural and conscious. Structural car dependence refers to the lack of transportation alternatives available to allow for a mode shift away from the personal automobile, while conscious car dependence is the result of personal habits and inaccurate perceptions of alternatives.

The authors concluded that, despite all of the variables to mode choice, conscious car dependence was one of the factors of highest importance and most easy to change. However, what the author's do not discuss is unconscious car dependence where people do not even realize their intense level of dependence on the automobile, posing a large obstacle to the success of passenger rail and other modes. As such exploring the impact of the automobile on transit projects is important for understanding the larger cultural, structural, and governmental forces at play.

2. *The Role of Politics*

Large cities in the United States have been losing population since 1960 due to suburbanization, changing the political power dynamics at the state level (Weir et al., 2005). In many cases the political power previously held by a state's largest city quickly eroded as these cities lost as much as 15% of their 1960 population by 2000 (Weir et al., 2005). This meant less political clout at the state level at a time when infrastructure needs began to increase, especially for transportation.

Weir et al. (2005) discussed the three traditional structures of governmental coalitions to explain the complex political relationships found in the United States: party-imposed coalitions, issue-based coalitions, and governor-brokered coalitions. These coalitions are crucially important to advancing transportation agendas. Party-imposed coalitions form when the leading constituency from the city (typically Democratic) merges with party allies at the state legislative level to push for the agenda of the city. This type of coalition works to advance a local transportation proposal within regional or state-wide transportation goals. Issue-based coalitions form around issues of mutual interest and attempt to garner regional cooperation to solve communal problems. This

type of coalition looks at larger regional transportation proposals, finding a way to solve problems at a broader level. Governor-brokered coalitions are typically very broad and complex constituencies with members from both sides of the aisle working together on larger issues. Here a governor merges divergent interests to fit into a larger transportation agenda.

Weir et al. (2005) see these distinct coalition groups as the basis for understanding how coalition building has typically worked in metropolitan America, but argued that these traditional forms of coalition building are often caught up in the larger issue of city versus suburbs. Thus the authors' introduced a new type of coalition, one that merges city and suburban interests as the solution to creating a regional agenda. While this may be the ideal way to move regional proposals (such as commuter rail) forward, the implementation of a regional political coalition is difficult at best. Whether these types of city-suburban coalitions will be able to emerge as the new model of governmental coalitions is questionable.

Throughout the 1960s and 70s coalitions of transit advocates found far-reaching support from a variety of areas including businesses and suburban commuters (Altshuler and Luberoff, 2003). Cities fought for "their share" of federal transit funds (O'Toole, 2007, p. 196), citing transit lines not necessarily to ease the mobility of residents, but to fulfill political agendas (Altshuler and Luberoff, 2003). As Altshuler, a former Massachusetts secretary of transportation, argued "transit proved to be a policy for all perspectives on the urban problem. Though its direct constituency was relatively small, its ideological appeal proved to be extremely broad" (Altshuler and Luberoff, 2003, p. 187). Powerful coalitions of transit advocates, developers and central city interest groups

used their political influence to push for rail projects (O'Toole, 2007). And while support from the downtown business sector and the political sector is important for the success of passenger rail (Levinson et al., 2012), this can be difficult in light of more contemporary assessments that describe transit proposals as politically divisive with support from Democrats but opposition from Republicans (Schwartz and Hawkins, 2013).

There is also the neoliberal shift in governance that has dominated since the late 1970s (Harvey, 2007; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Theodore, Peck and Brenner, 2011). Neoliberalism tends to focus on privatization, open markets, reduced public sector presence, and less federal power, and is often seen as a response to the Keynesian policies of governmental intervention, regulation of the private sector, and federally-funded public works programs that preceded it. In my assessment, the dominance of neoliberalism has constrained transit in the United States as public infrastructure investments have been devolved to the local level and the federal government embraces a more entrepreneurial approach.

Historian Owen Gutfreund (2004) suggested that the construction of highways in the United States was fueled by powerful highway lobbying groups that embedded the government bankroll of auto-centric planning into the core of American civilization. He traced these lobbying groups as far back as the late nineteenth century, and noted their increased influence in the passage of federal highway legislation in the early twentieth century. As Gutfreund argued, these groups established “the insertion of auto subsidies into the fabric of American political culture” (p. 32). Then the highway lobby gained an ally in the White House with the 1952 election of Dwight Eisenhower, and the Interstate Highway Act was passed in 1956 (Altshuler and Luberoff, 2003). Today the highway

lobby typically aligns with Republican leaders that continue to defend the implicit subsidizing of highways (Ross, 2006).

The Transportation Research Board (2001) suggested that regional governmental control of land use and transportation would help alleviate many of the issues facing the United States' metropolitan areas. In many cases individual municipalities are in charge of their own land use policies and transportation policy is often separated from land use and controlled by another local or regional authority.

The Portland, Oregon region serves as an example of an urban area where land use and transportation planning decisions are made at a regional level and coordinated into a broader plan (Transportation Research Board, 2001). This case suggests that when all of the stakeholders in the region join together to plan a coordinated land use/transportation plan, there are benefits for all involved. But politics often gets in the way of sound planning and cooperation, a product of the United States' politically fragmented governmental structure (Transportation Research Board, 2001). O'Toole (2007) argued that combining land use and transportation planning allowed for planners to manipulate land uses to serve their own agenda of getting people out of their cars. While I think this may have been the overall goal, O'Toole would have you believe this was a way to "socially engineer" (p. 196) Americans, instead of simply providing an alternative to an auto-centric lifestyle.

Overall, politics plays an important role in the fate of passenger rail. Regional political dynamics have now shifted power away from large cities as suburban districts put forth their own competing agendas. Governmental coalitions and regional

cooperation are very important to this discussion and provide a framework for understanding how these complex political relationships are formed.

3. Local and Regional Expectations of Commuter Rail

Planners often tout the expected economic development potential in the vicinity of rail lines and at rail station locations. As the Transportation Research Board (2003, 17-1) discussed, "transit-oriented development (TOD) generally refers to higher-density development, with pedestrian priority, located within easy walking distance of a major public transit station or stop(s)." These projects provide the potential for increased pedestrian activity seen as a way to curb urban sprawl and increase transit use (Transportation Research Board, 2003). This type of development conforms to designs often described as "new urbanism." Increased pedestrian activity, transit use, and denser development are some of the key tenets of the "new urbanist" movement. Similarly, the key objectives of transit-oriented developments are (Transportation Research Board, 2003, p. 17-2):

- To create places for people to live their daily lives through the use of transit and not the automobile.
- To introduce new riders to transit, especially those who currently drive.
- To build transit stations that serve as points of interest rather than park-and-rides.
- To respond to the auto-oriented elements of other developments.
- To emphasize environmental sustainability.

The type and amount of transit-oriented development that occurs can look very different, even on the same transit system. As the following examples from the Washington D.C. Metro system show, it is important to understand and work within the

local context when planning transit-oriented developments. In the example of the Wiehle Avenue station in Fairfax, VA some planners envisioned a "mini-city" rising from the station platform; however this type of development would be out of context with the surrounding land use patterns (Transportation Research Board, 2001). Others saw a more pedestrian friendly "town center" with upscale shops and inviting public spaces, something more in keeping with the local context. Whichever option was chosen, however, would still have to address the broader issue of land use patterns throughout the area to really have an impact on ridership.

The example of the Gallery Place station in historic downtown Washington D.C. showed how transit-oriented development has the potential to pay off with large increases in ridership and economic development (Transportation Research Board, 2003). Here the local central-city context can make it easier for ridership increases to happen since the development is part of a local land use pattern with increased density and pedestrian amenities. What is unknown in this scenario is if the increases in ridership would have come without the investments in transit-oriented development, something that is often questioned in these scenarios. The local conditions in suburban Fairfax, VA and in urban Washington D.C. are very different, so it is important that the local context be considered since the success of transit-oriented developments is also affected by surrounding land use patterns.

O'Toole (2009), a vocal critic of transit-oriented development, argued that rail transit, due to its inherent inflexibility, needed to create its own ridership; arguing that the fixed nature of rail does not allow for route flexibility to follow development and

ridership, so new development is needed near rail stations to spur ridership. He continued his argument by saying:

This leads transit agencies to promote intrusive land-use regulation that discourages low-density development away from their rail lines and mandates and/or subsidizes high-density developments close to rail stations (O'Toole, 2009, p. 67).

What O'Toole does not consider, however, is that new development not planned around transit is typically not amenable to buses or other forms of "flexible" transit, and that higher density development near rail stations may simply be a reflection of higher land values near the station because of rail, hence making low-density development an uneconomic use of the land.

Sometimes these developments do attract residents, businesses and increased ridership, but Cervero (2006) concluded that this was largely a reflection of a lifestyle preference for those choosing to locate there and not part of a larger shift in American priorities or preferences. Much of it comes down to personal preferences something that cannot be changed overnight.

A regional transit authority (RTA) is one of the most important elements of a broader approach to mobility. What follows are two examples of RTA's that formed in different time periods, under different funding mechanisms, and in different regional contexts, but each provides a deeper understanding of the expectation of RTA formation and the implications for regional transit cooperation.

The example of the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) is unique because of the time period in which it was formed and the issues it faced in the formation process (Golembiewski & Kiepper, 1976). MARTA was originally conceived as an inter-governmental partnership between the five counties encompassing the Atlanta

metro area; Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Gwinnett, and Clayton (Bullard et al., 2000). When it was finally formed in 1971, Fulton and DeKalb counties were the only counties that passed the 1% tax referendum to fund MARTA, so the provision of service was revised (MARTA, 2004). The fact that only two counties were now part of the RTA is significant in that some observers may have seen this as a victory, while others may have seen it as a loss due to the surrounding counties choosing not to be part of the system. As Golembiewski and Kiepper (1976, 46) argued, MARTA had the expectation to build, operate and fund a mass transit system of rail lines and buses for the whole region. This may have been too much to expect from MARTA, as opposed to the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) in the San Francisco Bay Area that was only responsible for the regional rail components (Golembiewski & Kiepper, 1976).

The example of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) provides an example of regional transit cooperation that was accomplished by careful negotiations between the three counties of Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach (Alpert et al., 2006). In the case of south Florida, there were many provisions put into the legislation that helped to protect county-level financial autonomy and yet still form a regional transit structure. Counties were each required to put in a certain amount of money to fund the regional rail system and local funding mechanisms, such as the transit sales tax in Miami-Dade County, could go to local projects within the County instead of to the larger RTA. So the south Florida RTA makes an interesting case, because of its unique funding mechanisms that allow for local control of financial resources and separate funding for the RTA.

While the cooperation of an entire metro region on transit may be the ultimate goal, these examples show that different approaches to a regional transit structure are possible. It may be too much to expect complete cooperation under one regional entity, so perhaps these examples can serve as a framework for regional cooperation where traditional approaches have not been successful.

The easiest way to understand the complex relationships involved in regional transit coordination is by using Ulberg's (cited in Meligrana, 1999) models of transportation governance. His levels of regional cooperation include: complete independence, informal coordination, formal coordination, partial integration, and full integration. However, this categorization is not rigid and many regions fall somewhere between categories. What this hierarchy shows is that while complete independence is not a regional approach and full integration may be the ultimate goal, there are varying degrees of coordination and integration of transit between these extremes that are specific to each region. Regional transit cooperation and integration is not a one size fits all concept, and must be looked at in respect to the local context. This hierarchy of coordination levels helps to contextualize the degree of coordination in a region and the resulting implications.

As I have shown, transit-oriented developments have the potential to bring increased economic development to station locations, but may only be a redistribution of investment in the region. These developments may bring increased ridership but again it may simply be a reflection of lifestyle choices for those that live or shop there. This leads me to questions about the expected benefits of economic development and transit-oriented development and whether these expected benefits may be an unrealistic

expectation. Additionally, the prospects for the creation of an RTA are significant when it comes to large regional rail projects. In those areas without an existing regional transit authority, these larger rail projects bring this issue to the forefront of debates and the examples of MARTA and SFRTA show how these approaches can change over time and vary in scope. Ulberg's models of transportation governance provide a way to better understand the levels of transit coordination and how different regions and different RTA's fit into this hierarchy.

4. Local, State and Federal Funding Issues

Transportation funding further complicates the issue of regional rail transit. In the United States federal and state funds make up a large percentage of the financing for transit projects. However, in most cases, some local financing is required. There are many ways in which this can occur such as fuel taxes, parking fees, motor vehicle registration fees, tolls, property taxes, and sales taxes (Institute of Public Administration, 1979). Support for these additional fees can be mixed. Lowe (2013) discussed how the federal share for the financing of transit projects, while growing, has been outpaced by local funding sources. A September 2011 *Railway Age* article discussed how several passenger rail projects throughout the United States now depend on local revenue sources as cities are committing to passenger rail transit, despite needing to cover the costs themselves (Bowen, 2011). This move is evidence that cities (and regions) really do see the value of passenger rail for their communities.

This is indicative of the neoliberal shift in governance described earlier, devolving more financial responsibility for transit to the local level. Despite the provisions for flexible use of funding introduced in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency

Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and subsequent authorizations, allowing states to use federal funds for highways or transit (Smart Growth America, 2014), the funds for highways cover as much as 80-90% of infrastructure costs while transit funds only cover about 50% of infrastructure costs (Pantell, 2009). This set-up not only subsidizes highway building but leaves state and local funds to cover a larger gap for transit projects.

Altshuler and Luberoff (2003) illustrate how transit funding has changed since the mid-twentieth century. Fares accounted for up to 91% of revenue in the 1950s and dropped to 25% by the 1990s, with state and local funding as low as 9% in the 1950s and peaking at 58% in the 1990s. As Altshuler (1979, p. 31) argued "throughout the 1950s, when the interstate highway program was getting underway, the conventional wisdom was that all transit costs, capital as well as operating, should be financed by users." Federal assistance for rail transit did come with the Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964, but after the 1980s federal money to maintain and operate transit systems fell dramatically, concentrating instead on capital for new projects (Altshuler and Luberoff, 2003, p. 185-186). This meant that more local funding needed to be provided for the operation of transit, part of the devolution of neoliberalism leaving state and local authorities to pay for services previously funded at the federal level.

The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) "New Starts" program is the current capital program for "fixed guideway" transit projects throughout the United States (Lowe, 2013). However, the funding through this program is only available on a competitive basis, requires a local funding source to cover a percentage of the costs, and cannot be used to fund operations. So while it allows cities without already existing infrastructure to build passenger rail and other fixed guideway systems, it still has several limitations.

The New Starts process consists of a series of stages which local agencies, such as transit system operators or regional planning commissions, must apply for on a competitive basis (Lowe, 2013). Once systems planning and alternatives analysis are completed, as part of the process, a project moves to preliminary engineering and final design. If these stages are successful the project goes into a pipeline where it is rated against other projects using criteria including cost versus benefit. Lowe (2013) also suggested that the stability of local financing can affect the decision to receive federal funds.

This literature shows how over the past 60 years transit funding has changed dramatically at the local, state and federal levels. Much of this responsibility has been devolved to the local level as federal commitment to transit has largely shifted to capital for construction of new projects and not for the operation of transit systems.

5. *The Legacy of Earlier Local Debates*

Passenger rail initiatives in the Milwaukee area have a long history of ideological polarization (Casey, 1995; Hayes, 2010; Johnson, 2014; Lang, 2005). As Hayes (2010, p. 171) argued, "No single issue in Southeastern Wisconsin . . . revealed regional divisions more than transit." Casey (1995) traced the beginnings of these feuds in southeast Wisconsin to the freeway-building era of the 1960s with then-Milwaukee mayor Henry Maier coming out against freeways while surrounding counties supported freeway building for ease of mobility. This sentiment is similar to what I found in my own study into the light rail debate of the 1990s with then-Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist being anti-freeway and pro-light rail, while the surrounding counties wanted expanded freeways but opposed the provision of light rail (Johnson, 2014).

During the light rail debate these divisions became more than just regional; they were now politically partisan, pitting conservatives against liberals in a debate that was hardly ever in the interest of mobility for the citizens of southeast Wisconsin (Hayes, 2010; Lang, 2005). According to Hayes (2010), political divisiveness took on a more prominent role in 2002 when Republican Scott Walker, then a member of the state assembly, ran for Milwaukee County Executive as a staunch opponent to any form of rail transit.

Planners and transit advocates started to explore the use of light rail in Milwaukee in the 1980s, but these proposals never got very far (Lang, 2005). The issue of light rail was revived when the Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) was signed into law in 1991 (Johnson 2014). As part of the bill, states would receive Interstate Cost Estimate (ICE) funds from the federal government to complete sections of interstate highway, but the money could also be diverted to other modes such as transit and bike infrastructure. Wisconsin received \$241 million in ICE funds, thrusting the debate over light rail back on the table. The political scuffle over light rail in Milwaukee would continue until 1999 when a compromise was reached whereby light rail was scrapped from the plans and the money diverted to highway and bridge projects, plus a small rail transit project in the City of Milwaukee which would get \$91.5 million of the federal funds. This compromise at the end of the debate set a precedent for the transportation priorities in southeast Wisconsin. The Milwaukee transit project would be fought over for another decade to come (Hayes, 2010; Johnson, 2014). In 2009, Congress, through a measure included in President Obama's first budget bill, split the money with 60% going to the City of Milwaukee for their streetcar project and 40%

going to Milwaukee County for express bus routes on the Milwaukee County Transit System (MCTS) (Hayes, 2010).

As the preceding literature shows, the politics of passenger rail transit in southeast Wisconsin has been ideologically divisive. The legacy of the regional and political scuffles over transportation options and priorities continues to plague southeast Wisconsin as the mobility of area residents is determined by the power of political figures, and not the transportation needs of the people.

Research Questions

The preceding literature review raises the following questions about why the KRM proposal failed which will guide my research, specifically:

1. What was the influence of the automobile?
 - What was the impact of an auto-dominated culture on the proposal?
2. What was the role of politics?
 - How did politics influence the failure of the KRM proposal?
 - Was coalition-building part of the KRM proposal?
 - What were the obstacles to regional cooperation in the case of KRM?
3. What were the expectations of KRM and were they too high?
 - What could KRM's potential impact have been on Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha in terms of economic development, transit-oriented development, and regional transit cooperation?
4. How was the issue of funding addressed?
 - What were the potential sources of funding especially at federal and local levels?
 - How much of KRM's expenses would be covered by fares and what would this mean for local funding?

- What was the discourse on funding?
 - Were funding issues responsible for the failure of the KRM proposal?
5. What was the impact of the previous light-rail debate on the KRM?
- How did the legacy of regional disagreements over transportation affect the KRM?

Methodology

The research uses a variety of primary and secondary sources. These sources include print publications and the online archives of the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC), and information from Transit NOW's website, a local public transit advocacy organization. In addition, I analyzed newspaper coverage of the issue in local and regional publications such as the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, *Daily Reporter*, *Racine Journal Times* and *Biz Times Milwaukee*. Finally, three in-person interviews were conducted with key stakeholders intimately involved in the KRM commuter rail proposal.

My first interview was with a public policy analyst that has researched and written about transportation issues in Milwaukee as well as other cities in the United States. My second interview was with a transportation planner that was involved in the KRM proposal. My third interview was with a transit advocate that worked on the promotion of the KRM.

All interviews were conducted in a private, one-on-one format and were recorded and transcribed. The interview questions (see Appendix B) were specifically formulated to elicit answers to the five research questions from each of the interviewees. All of the interviews were semi-structured to allow the interviewee to expand upon issues they felt were important, however, each interviewee was asked the same questions. Interviewee

information has been kept confidential so generic job titles were assigned solely as a way to distinguish them.

All of the newspaper, website, and archival data was analyzed by hand and categorized based on answering one of the research questions:

1. What was the influence of the automobile?
2. What was the role of politics?
3. What were the expectations of KRM and were they too high?
4. How was the issue of funding addressed?
5. What was the impact of the previous light-rail debate on the KRM?

All of the content relating to each research question was then transcribed into a separate document and subdivided into sections of related content. These subsections were determined after an analysis of the content to find the key factors that relate to answering each research question based on the number of sources discussing similar ideas, how the content ties-in with the literature, and how it helped to answer that specific research question.

Interview data was analyzed and categorized in the same manner, but separate from the other content. A more integrated approach to analyzing all of the content together was not used in this case because interviews were conducted after the initial analysis of newspaper, website, and archival data which allowed for the literature and other data to guide the interviews. The three interview transcripts were analyzed for content related to the subsections of content described above using the same criteria. The interview analysis was used to substantiate and provide deeper understanding of the other sources, while also providing new insights. The comprehensive analysis that follows

incorporates all content, subdivided by the key factors found throughout the analysis that provide an answer to each research question.

Findings and Analysis

1. Automobile Culture and the KRM

This section addresses the question of what the impact of an auto-dominated culture was on the failure of the KRM proposal. My analysis found that the impact of an auto-dominated culture on the failure of the KRM proposal can be traced to three important factors: the integrated nature of the automobile into the southeastern Wisconsin culture and economy, the level of highway congestion found in the region, and the inherent bias in favor of highways over transit.

The "mass motorization" and "pervasive motorization" of the United States along with increased suburbanization in the post-World War II period, discussed previously, are key macro-level forces influencing automobile proliferation throughout the United States. However, at the micro-level the impact of the automobile in southeastern Wisconsin can also be attributed to the area being a dominant hub of auto-related manufacturing during the American industrial age. The area was home to important auto manufactures like American Motors and Nash Motors, and auto-related businesses like AC Spark Plug and Johnson Controls (Hayes, 2010, p. 80). In addition to these are related industries like Mercury Marine, Briggs and Stratton, Harley-Davidson, and manufacturers of other motorized equipment like Allis Chalmers and J.I. Case (Hayes, 2010, p. 80). This large presence of manufacturing devoted to the internal combustion engine made the automobile an integrated part of the culture and economy of the region.

The KRM proposal was planned within the context of this automobile culture, one consequence of which were the obstacles to attracting ridership when compared to the flexibility of the automobile. Planners and SEWRPC knew that for KRM commuter rail to be a viable alternative to the automobile, travel times had to be competitive (SEWRPC, 2011b). The KRM proposal estimates showed travel times equal to or better than those of driving (Transit NOW, 2012). The transportation planner interviewed during my research acknowledged that the vast majority of people in southeast Wisconsin drive to work or other destinations and attributed this to the lack of alternatives available here, leaving many people without a choice. This highlights the structural car dependence, as introduced by Blainey et al. (2012), seen in southeast Wisconsin where many people depend on their cars due to structural transportation barriers. In addition, the aforementioned transportation planner discussed the debates about transit service within the region; indicating that some people said public transit options were not available because there was no demand for them, while others said that if there were better alternatives to the automobile the demand would follow.

As Rosemary Potter, executive director of Transit NOW discussed, the key is to get people into the habit of using commuter rail, such as during the forecasted reconstruction of Interstate 94 (Grundle, 2006). This is connected to the idea of conscious car dependence as described earlier by Blainey et al. (2012), where people are consciously (but habitually) attached to the automobile and the key to sparking change is to change people's habits during construction or other major events. Along with this notion of conscious car dependence, I argue that there is also a dimension of unconscious

car dependence, especially here in southeast Wisconsin, where people are completely unaware of their dependence on the automobile.

The automobile culture in southeast Wisconsin seems to also be influenced by the lack of appreciation for transit. As discussed in my interview with the transit advocate, there really isn't a broad understanding of what transit (more specifically rail transit) can do for a region largely because the people of southeast Wisconsin don't travel to the great transit cities of the country (or the world) and therefore don't appreciate it. This speaks to how the culture of the region has influenced the transportation options available.

There are differing opinions about the congestion levels in southeast Wisconsin, which may come down to an issue of relativity. Transit NOW argued that the study area suffers from traffic congestion and delays that have cost residents and businesses over \$400 million and that the implementation of KRM commuter rail could reduce congestion and overall traffic volumes in the area (Transit NOW, 2012). However, the public policy analyst I interviewed saw the levels of congestion in Milwaukee as low enough that many people do not see a need for alternatives to the automobile. The transportation planner provided yet another opinion indicating that congestion in southeast Wisconsin is comparable to other cities of similar size, noting that it is important to keep in mind the amount of congestion compared to the size of the city.

Transit NOW's argument about the high level of congestion is evidence of the automobile culture in the area with the discourse surrounding the proposal tailored to automobile owners. Even though congestion levels may not be as high as in other cities, this argument gave drivers, especially those that are consciously or unconsciously car

dependent, a reason to support KRM. However, there is no evidence that these arguments about KRM reducing congestion in the region resonated with the people.

An analysis of the numbers reveals an inherent bias towards the automobile and highways in Wisconsin transportation planning. An estimated \$1.9 billion is going towards the rebuilding and widening of Interstate 94 between the Wisconsin/Illinois border and Milwaukee, while the KRM commuter rail would have cost \$230 million for construction, 12% of the cost of the freeway (Sandler, 2007). While the need for the reconstruction of the aging highway should not be minimized, the additional costs of expansion could have arguably gone to the KRM proposal which could have diverted people to the use of commuter rail over driving. As Ward Lyles of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* said of then-Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, "Walker's vision for the future is clear: cars and cars only, never mind the costs" (Lyles, 2007).

Even with the flexibility of federal funding, described earlier, which could go to transit instead of highways, there is still an implicit subsidy to highway projects that receive a larger percentage of their funding from federal funds, leaving many states, like Wisconsin, to prioritize highways over transit. Additionally, there is an ambiguity of the federal role in transportation; where past objectives, such as the Interstate Highway System, mean the prioritization of highways to serve mobility needs to the neglect of transit infrastructure.

As the following opinion piece from the February 9, 2007 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* on the KRM proposal shows, local residents were also frustrated with this issue:

Even though it may not serve everyone directly, it will serve everyone indirectly by taking hundreds of cars off the roads. In the 1950s, the car and oil companies, along with their friends in the U.S. government, conspired to build our U.S. Interstate Highway System, encouraging the massive use of new cars and use of

fuel to power them . . . closed down many public transportation companies, giving our citizens no choice but to buy and run their new cars on these new superhighways. The state of Wisconsin and federal government are now planning to widen sections of I-94 between Milwaukee and Chicago to accommodate hundreds of additional cars over time (Myers, 2007).

This critique of car manufacturers, oil companies, and the government in the proliferation of the automobile in the United States and southeast Wisconsin shows the extent to which this inherent bias towards highways over transit has affected southeast Wisconsin culture. While the use of the word "conspired" might be a bit strong, it is hard to refute the influence of the Interstate Highway System on the demise of transit that has left many Americans with little choice but to own and operate a private automobile.

As my analysis has shown, the evidence for an auto-dominated culture in southeastern Wisconsin is clear. The automobile is an integrated part of the southeastern Wisconsin culture and economy; this can be seen in the concentration of automobile-related industries, the way the proposal was planned and disseminated to the public, the car dependency of the public, and a lack of appreciation and understanding for what transit can mean to a community. The levels of traffic congestion in the region seem to be different depending on whom you ask; while traffic congestion was used as a selling tool by some, this argument did not resonate with the people and left many wondering if the service was necessary. The inherent bias towards highways over transit is easily seen in the numbers, something local officials never seemed to question but a fact that upset some residents.

Despite the influence of the automobile on the KRM proposal and the evidence for an auto-dominated culture in southeast Wisconsin, my analysis revealed that other factors were in fact more influential in the demise of the KRM proposal. As further

analysis will reveal, the proposal was still able to move forward and might have even happened despite the influence of an auto-dominated culture.

2. Politics of KRM

My analysis revealed that the role of politics in the failure of the KRM proposal can be traced to five key factors: a change in general political tone and support, the formation of SERTA, the lack of support from Milwaukee leaders, the 2010 Governor's race, and the decisions of three key political figures.

The political tone was positive in early 2005 after the formation of an "intergovernmental partnership" to begin studying the KRM commuter rail proposal (Ryan, 2005; SEWRPC, 2011a). However, the debate would soon turn contentious as described in this March 22, 2007 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article:

It's time to end the Milwaukee transportation wars . . . The dispute over funding to modernize southeastern Wisconsin's aging transportation system seems likely to surpass the Hatfield-McCoy feud in intensity and longevity . . . It seems as if present-day partisans have inherited their positions rather than truly understanding why they are fighting. The current clash over transportation spending has more to do with the personal agendas of politicians than the culture wars between suburban and urban lifestyles that started the feud. Unfortunately, as long as transit improvements are held hostage in that war, the region's businesses and residents will suffer greatly (Lyles, 2007).

This account shows that the lines had been drawn in a political war on transit in southeast Wisconsin, with debates now focused more on ideologies and less on the particular issues surrounding transit.

Along with this shift in political tone, was a shift in the support of political leaders on both sides of the aisle. While all of my interviewees discussed how early on in the debate over KRM there was actually a great deal of Republican support (or at least not staunch opposition) that eventually changed to opposition, my analysis also revealed a

change in support by Democratic leaders. Four political figures that I will expand upon later in this analysis, two Democrats and two Republicans, changed or altered their stance on the KRM proposal. Democrats Tom Barrett and Gwen Moore, while in support of the proposal in the beginning had changed their stance as concerns over funding became apparent. Republicans Scott Walker and Robin Vos, while vocal opponents of the proposal in the end, they were not always opposed to the proposal. For reasons that will be revealed throughout this analysis, these political leaders changed their position on, and subsequently the trajectory of, the KRM proposal.

I saw evidence of this shift in political support as far back as 2004 when it became clear that funding for the operations of the project would not be coming from the State of Wisconsin, but from local sources (Sandler, 2004). As a 2006 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article showed, when it came to approval of local funding there was a great deal of support for the KRM in principle but not in practice (Resler, 2006). Then in early 2007 the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee released an economic impact study of the KRM proposal that boasted of job creation, expanded tourism, increased property values, and increased economic development that would come from the KRM (Institute for Survey & Policy Research, 2007). However, Rubin and Poole (2008) of the Reason Foundation, a conservative research organization, refuted the findings of this study citing its unrealistic assessment of the economic impact of KRM, while also attacking the "alternatives analysis" performed by SERTA (a full analysis of this debate to follow in the next section). Then came the economic crisis of 2008 where fiscal austerity policies became the new imperative. As the transportation planner I interviewed indicated while there was bipartisan support for the KRM proposal at the beginning, a political shift occurred in the

wake of the 2008 financial crisis that changed the political tone. In late 2009 Republican candidate for Governor Mark Neumann came out against the KRM citing the lack of evidence showing the proposed line as being economically viable (Forster, 2009). This would be followed in early 2010 with similar declarations by fellow Republican candidates Robin Vos (2010) and Scott Walker (Sandler, 2010d). At the same time, Randal O'Toole of the Cato Institute, another conservative research group, came to speak at a Racine Tea Party event in opposition of rail and KRM (Ryan, 2010a & 2010d). So while the shift in political tone and support by politicians can be traced back as far as 2004 when funding became an issue, it seems that the decisive shift came in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis where a combination of fiscally conservative policies and project scrutiny brought on by conservative groups shifted the political tone of the proposal.

The formation of SERTA was also very important to the discussion of politics. According to the transit advocate I interviewed, initially planners and other stakeholders in the planning process, knowing the opposition of the western half of Racine County, proposed to carve this section of the county out from under the umbrella of SERTA. The RTA proposed would include all of Milwaukee and Kenosha Counties but only the eastern half of Racine County. This warrants a brief discussion of two key components of Racine County's political structure that influenced the trajectory of SERTA and KRM.

First of all, there was political (and lifestyle) polarization separating the two halves of Racine County. The transit advocate I interviewed described an east-west divide in Racine County, with rural western Racine County being very conservative, and the more urban and suburban eastern Racine County, including the City of Racine, as being more liberal, Interstate 94 basically divided the two sections of the county in half.

Western Racine County was not in support of the KRM proposal or any tax increases to fund it (or the RTA more broadly), while eastern Racine County and the City of Racine itself were counting on KRM to revitalize the local economy. Racine Mayor John Dickert, a supporter of KRM, feared that "a political scuffle over buses will be the undoing of the KRM" and would hinder the ability of Racine to attract new jobs and development (Ryan, 2009c).

Second, because of the structure of the Racine County Board, the City of Racine actually has very little power, so the western portions of the county could dictate what happened in the rest of the county. This was something confirmed by Robin Vos in a video recording of a Tea Party event in Racine where he stated that, "we are fortunate that in Racine County we have a County Executive and County Board that is controlled by conservatives, and we should be very proud of that" (Ryan, 2010d). As I will elaborate on later, this would prove to be significant for KRM. This structure of government refers to Weir et al.'s (2005) discussion of shifting political dynamics that means less power for cities and urban areas as suburban and rural voting blocs become more influential.

As described by the transit advocate I interviewed, the move to carve out western Racine County from the RTA upset some Milwaukee County supervisors who argued that western Racine County had to pay their fair share. They wanted this area included, even though studies showed that less than 25% of the revenue for KRM in Racine County would come from the western section of the county, since it was largely rural. My interviewee recalled telling the Milwaukee County supervisors not to fight this, because it would end up killing the proposal.

The decision to include western Racine County was important to the failure of the KRM proposal because local Racine County officials, most notably Robin Vos, eventually became the biggest opponents of the KRM that was forced upon them by Milwaukee County bureaucrats. The public policy analyst I interviewed substantiated this by describing how conservative citizen groups and legislators in the Racine area started to label the proposal as a "boondoggle." As a result, the KRM and the RTA would have new opposition to contend with. Consequently, this political move by Milwaukee County leaders became a key event in the failure of the KRM proposal; I also argue that it is possible that the proposal would have moved along with less opposition had Milwaukee County leaders not fought for the inclusion of western Racine County, perhaps resulting in a different outcome.

Now we turn to a discussion of local Milwaukee leaders, and their role in the failure of the KRM proposal. My analysis shows that support for KRM in Milwaukee County, a typically Democratic stronghold, was mixed. In 2004 Democratic Mayor Tom Barrett said he supported the commuter rail plan and was "encouraged that this is a project that business leaders want to see happen" (Sandler, 2004). However, by 2010 the Mayor voiced reservations about KRM (Sandler, 2010e). While he was in support of a downtown streetcar system, his support for rail transit did not necessarily extend to the KRM proposal. He had concerns about the funding of the proposal as well as the coordination with Metra to allow transfers to their system in Kenosha. Mayor Barrett simply said "I'm not going to commit to it" (Sandler, 2010e).

Democratic Representative Gwen Moore showed support for the KRM in her effort to secure federal funding for the proposal in 2005 (Ryan, 2005). In 2010 however,

Moore spoke out against KRM, not because she didn't support the proposal, but because she felt the funding issue that faced MCTS needed to be addressed first, before KRM continued any further (Sandler, 2010f). Moore had proposed to put KRM on hold for one year until local bus funding was agreed upon, but her proposal did not garner enough support to pass (Sandler, 2010f). Moore's argument for putting buses first, seems largely to come from her need to appeal to her Milwaukee constituents who rely on the bus for their daily needs; especially since local elections were barely two months away. However, she still showed support for KRM which would have had four stops in her congressional district.

Milwaukee County Supervisor Michael Mayo, and Milwaukee County Board Chairman Lee Holloway were also opposed to the proposal, and went so far as to ask the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to deny the RTA's funding application for preliminary engineering (Ryan, 2010c). Their opposition was mainly because of the funding crisis MCTS was facing, an issue they would have to deal with themselves at some point.

The issue over MCTS funding was also noted by the public policy analyst I interviewed who discussed how the Milwaukee County Board was very concerned that KRM was going to divert resources away from MCTS. The county was struggling just to keep buses afloat and maintain a decent level of service, leaving many to question why KRM should even be built if current bus transit systems are struggling for funds. These reservations indicate how important the KRM was not only for mobility, but for the creation of an RTA that could provide a dedicated source of funding. The public policy analyst also emphasized that traditionally Democratic constituencies in Milwaukee were

not out there fighting for KRM. So while conservatives and anti-rail groups formed a strong coalition against KRM, there was not a coherent voice on the other side advocating for the proposal.

This leads back to our earlier discussion of governmental coalitions. Unlike the broad coalitions of transit advocates, developers and business interests, as discussed by Althshuler and Luberoff (2003) that would fight for these proposals; KRM never had a broad enough support base to form this type of coalition. Furthermore, the Republicans of southeast Wisconsin were able to form a party-imposed coalition, as described by Weir et al. (2005). With Milwaukee's suburban communities aligning with other Republicans at the state level to fight off costly rail transit proposals, Democrats were not able to broker similar coalitions to advance KRM. And while Gov. Doyle was able to form a governor-brokered coalition to fit KRM and the creation of an RTA in his agenda, his desire for a regional solution, which would have been similar to Weir et al.'s (2005) city-suburban coalition, may have ended up killing the proposal.

The 2010 governor's race showcased the politics of rail in Wisconsin. As Larry Sandler (2010e) of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* described:

Railroads and politics have one thing in common: They're all about the timing. Trains run by schedules. Politicians wait for the right moment to make their moves. Political circumstances have brought three different rail transit plans to the forefront simultaneously - only to thrust them into an election-year controversy where some plans may not survive. Politically, all three are linked in the minds of their opponents, as symbols of unnecessary taxation and skewed transportation spending priorities. The train debate in recent years has turned partisan, pitting Democratic rail backers against GOP critics, now the rail projects have emerged as an issue in the fall governor's race.

Here, Sandler refers to the convergence of three major passenger rail proposals in Wisconsin at the time; the downtown Milwaukee streetcar, the high speed rail running from Chicago to Minneapolis-St. Paul, and the KRM commuter rail. The fact is that the

details of each proposal didn't matter; rail was now a party-line issue and one that would be at the forefront of the race for Wisconsin Governor.

Republican candidates for Governor, former U.S. Representative Mark Neumann (Forster, 2009), Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker (Sandler, 2010d), and state Representative Robin Vos (Vos, 2010) were all revving up their bids to clinch the Republican nomination and used their opposition to rail as a political tool to secure votes. Also, as discussed earlier, Republican constituencies typically align with highway lobbying groups that are highly influential especially during important elections such as this. So it is possible that highway lobby interests were also guiding this anti-rail discourse. Based on my analysis, by this time it was simply too late for KRM to survive. As the public policy analyst I interviewed described, "KRM was still on life support" at this time, and seemed doomed to fail.

Finally, we turn to a discussion of three key political figures and their role in the failure of the KRM proposal. These key actors are: then Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker (who eventually became Governor), Republican State Representative Robin Vos (who eventually became Assembly Speaker), and then Democratic Governor Jim Doyle.

As described by the public policy analyst I interviewed, then-Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker was initially supportive of the idea of commuter rail as an alternative to light rail, but his support only went so far. In a SERTA board meeting in 2007, the committee agreed upon funding the RTA with a 0.5% sales tax. This was tabled at the next meeting when Scott Walker (along with Racine County Executive Bill McReynolds) opposed the sales tax increase (Ryan, 2007b). Then in May of 2010, as

Walker was revving up his bid for governor, he officially came out against the KRM commuter rail proposal (Sandler, 2010d). While always being opposed to any sales tax increase to pay for KRM, he was not a vocal opponent of the proposal. His statement in opposition specifically refers to the shift in politics described in my interviews and captured in my analysis. As SERTTA vice chairman, Julia Taylor told Larry Sandler of the *Journal Sentinel* "over the years, Scott has expressed support for the concept of commuter rail. I'm disappointed that he is changing his position" (Sandler, 2010d). The transit advocate I interviewed remarked on how Scott Walker took on the high-speed rail issue as a campaign issue, leaving many Wisconsinites to confuse KRM with high-speed rail and buy into the political discourse of rail as a costly tax-burden for Wisconsin.

As mentioned previously, one of the most vocal opponents of the KRM commuter rail was Republican State Representative Robin Vos of Racine County. However initially, Vos was not adamantly opposed to KRM, just how it was to be funded (Burke, 2007a). He showed support by asking that the KRM be brought to a referendum vote and to let the people decide its fate. But this may have just been a veil hiding his true opposition to the KRM, seen in his voting pattern on issues surrounding the proposal and his failure to align with the Racine business community that was strongly in favor of KRM (Burke, 2007a). Then in an editorial in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* in April 10, 2010, Vos came out as being decidedly opposed to the KRM and argued that transportation in southeast Wisconsin was about priorities and that KRM would drain scarce resources when the priority should be fixing the roads and buses that are already in trouble (Vos, 2010). Vos also blamed SERTTA for not keeping buses a priority and only worrying about funding for the failing bus systems after KRM's future depended on a

stabilized bus system. But as my analysis revealed, SERTA officials were just as concerned about funding the struggling bus systems in the region as they were a commuter rail line.

As the transit advocate I spoke with revealed, Robin Vos also linked himself with other Racine County conservatives such as Fred Young, a former Racine businessman to fight the KRM proposal. Fred Young was on the board of the Cato Institute and the Reason Foundation, two groups that vocally opposed rail proposals throughout the United States. They formed a coalition to stop the KRM proposal in its tracks. This was the beginning of what one might call the anti-transit coalition that fought to stop the KRM proposal. In one instance, a rail transit opponent named Randall O'Toole from the Cato Institute was brought in to speak at a Tea Party event in Racine. In a video recording of this event, Vos made it clear that he was fine with bringing the issue to referendum because he knew it would not pass and was depending on his Racine County Republican supporters to make sure the KRM proposal failed (Ryan, 2010d). My interviewee described how this team of opponents would go around and distort the facts about KRM and the RTA, something for which people behind the initiative were not prepared. These proponents were caught off-guard by the opposition that emerged in 2009 and 2010. The push-back continued with national conservative organizations such as the Americans for Prosperity, throwing money and resources into local elections; transit and KRM were used to wedge the voting public and help the Republicans gain the majority in the state legislature and fill the Governor's mansion.

In 2011, once Scott Walker was Governor, Robin Vos was Assembly Speaker, and the political tide had changed, proposals to dissolve Wisconsin's RTA's (SERTA

included) were introduced ultimately killing the KRM commuter rail proposal in its tracks (Jones, 2011). This proposal put the KRM on indefinite hold. But as I alluded to earlier the proposal was already doomed to fail by this point. It was not long after the budget committee voted to dissolve all of the state's regional transit authorities (Marley, 2011) that KRM was officially declared dead in a July 25, 2011 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article (Sandler, 2011). This move was spearheaded by Representative Robin Vos and backed by Governor Scott Walker and the rest of the Republican-dominated state Legislature. So it would seem the natural conclusion would be to blame the Republicans for the failure of the KRM proposal via their efforts to dissolve all of the state's regional transit authorities. This conclusion has been stated even recently; as a *Journal Sentinel* writer, James Rowen proclaimed, "Let's be clear: decisions principally by Gov. Walker and Republican legislative leaders, with the support of conservative commentators, have undermined transit and area residents who use it" (Rowen, 2013). However, by this point KRM was already "on life support" as the public policy analyst argued, so the attack on the RTAs was merely the final nail in the coffin.

Governor Jim Doyle, a Democrat and a supporter of KRM and other passenger rail proposals, also played an important political role in the failure of the KRM proposal. Doyle was insistent on the provision of a regional solution to the funding of KRM and the RTA. When legislators gave Milwaukee County the approval to create its own RTA and increase local sales taxes to help fund a Milwaukee Transit Authority, the provision was vetoed by Governor Jim Doyle citing his desire for a regional solution (Sandler, 2010e). Additionally, as the public policy analyst I interviewed commented, "[Governor] Doyle was not a Lee Holloway fan [and] you had a county board that people even in Democratic

circles did not trust." So it would seem that Governor Doyle did not want the Milwaukee County Board, or Lee Holloway, to be in control of a Milwaukee County only RTA and its funds. The transit advocate I spoke with voiced similar sentiments, saying that KRM leaders and business leaders thought that money at the Milwaukee County level was not being managed well and there was fear of having the proposal attached to this mismanagement. This interviewee also felt that Governor Doyle thought it would be easy to arrive at a regional solution and vote on the RTA again, but it proved to be harder than the governor had anticipated. I argue that the Governor's veto citing the need for a more regional solution was an event that, while well intentioned to bring about a larger regional funding mechanism, showed his short-sightedness given the contentiousness of the previous light rail debate.

An analysis of the politics behind the failure of the KRM proposal reveals how the decisions of a few individuals changed the trajectory of the proposal from being on its way to preliminary engineering, to being declared dead in the wake of the 2010 governor's race. As this analysis has shown, opposition on the part of Republicans does not adequately explain the failure of the KRM proposal. As I see it, there was an overall political shift in southeast Wisconsin that left the KRM proposal as a victim of increased scrutiny and fiscal austerity. There was also mixed support from Milwaukee's Democratic constituency and especially the Milwaukee County Board that also factored into the politics of KRM. The Milwaukee County Board showed mixed support for the proposal, and was widely known for their mismanagement of money. But most importantly, their insistence that western Racine County pay their fair share into the RTA became one of the key events that changed the trajectory of the KRM proposal. Representative Robin

Vos, while not initially coming out against KRM, joined forces with national conservative groups that scrutinized the proposal. The RTA compromise was then vetoed by the Governor which was probably the most decisive political move that put the KRM on "life support." Finally, when the 2010 governor's race got underway, the KRM and rail transit in general was used as an issue to wedge voters; Republicans distorted the reality of proposals throughout the campaign. Once Robin Vos gained his leadership position in the state legislature he introduced legislation to dissolve all of the state's RTA's, including SERTA, leaving the proposal stalled at the station.

3. Expectations of KRM

This section addresses the expectations of KRM. The analysis that follows looks at the overall expectations for transit-oriented development and economic development, the specific expectations for this development in Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha, and the larger expectation of regional transit cooperation.

Transit advocates and planners believed that KRM was a way to stimulate high-density urban development near stations where careful planning of land use was key (SEWRPC, 2011b). Transit-oriented development was seen as the most important element of land use development near stations with dense development patterns laid out in a transit and pedestrian friendly manner (Transit NOW, 2012). Throughout my research I saw transit-oriented development as a common discussion topic among those involved with the proposal. A *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article from February 23, 2006 boasted that the KRM corridor was home to large amounts of available commercial and residential space that could attract "high-tech jobs and employees" once the necessary transportation infrastructure was in place (Mariano, 2006). So not only was development

of the station locations important for KRM, it was also important for this development to create areas of consumption and labor to promote capital accumulation.

The prospects for economic development along the entire corridor were the subject of much discussion. The transit advocate interviewed described how economic developers from out of town would come to look at the possibilities available along the entire corridor and were amazed at the potential that was being missed. The transit advocate further discussed the vast amounts of open land along the rail lines, and near the proposed stations that had tremendous potential. KRM quickly became labeled as an economic development driver and a vast untapped resource of new jobs and transit-oriented development. Developers were anxious to capitalize on this opportunity and businesses were on board as well.

A 2007 economic impact study was completed by the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Institute for Survey and Policy Research. The study boasted of the \$560 million impact from over 4,700 new jobs during construction, expanded tourism from northern Illinois with a \$20 million dollar impact, and increased development along the corridor and especially at station locations, increasing property values up to 20% (Institute for Survey and Policy Research, 2007). Furthermore, the study argued that development in general would increase exponentially and that anywhere from 20% to 50% of this development would not happen without the KRM. Ridership estimates showed about 1.7 million passengers per year would use the commuter rail service. SEWRPC had conducted earlier studies of the impact of KRM, but these reports were less focused on specific economic development outcomes. The 1998 report focused on land use, existing transportation infrastructure, and the planning of potential commuter

rail (SEWRPC, 1998). And the 2003 study, while discussing the economic development opportunities, was more general about the impact and less sensational about the outcomes (SEWRPC, 2003).

Not long after the 2007 economic development report was released a *Racine Journal Times* article boasted about the "substantial" economic impact KRM would have on the region (Burke, 2007b). Similarly, Rosemary Potter of Transit NOW in a February 2007 *Biz Times Milwaukee* article discussed the findings of the report and was hopeful that this study would "help to quantify the substantial economic benefits that KRM is expected to bring to businesses in the region" (Potter, 2007). Around the same time SEWRPC released a report that used the figures from the UWM report to illustrate the economic potential of KRM (SEWRPC, 2007a). Furthermore, SERTA chairman Karl Ostby showed optimism for the economic development outcomes that KRM could produce (Ryan, 2007b). So proponents used the 2007 economic development report as an opportunity to frame the discussion of KRM around economic development and away from the issues of funding and politics that were plaguing the proposal. But while proponents were now framing the proposal around economic development the media still largely focused on funding and politics in their coverage of KRM.

Then Rubin and Poole (2008) released the aforementioned study that questioned the thoroughness of the alternatives analysis conducted by SERTA, but most directly targeted the economic development analysis of the 2007 University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee study. The authors argued that the economic development heralded in the 2007 report "appears doubtful" and criticized the alternatives analysis completed by SERTA and argued that several bus alternatives were not considered, especially as it

concerns cost versus benefit with bus alternatives costing significantly less than the commuter rail option. The report concluded by saying:

We find the projections of economic and real estate benefits of commuter rail to not be credible in methodology or in purported results and suggest that transportation decisions such as this be made based on transportation costs and benefits (p. 7).

The public policy analyst I interviewed also questioned the claims of economic development and transit-oriented development and felt they were "oversold from the get-go." The policy analyst further argued that all the hype behind these claims may have been what caused people to really scrutinize the proposal making it easy for detractors to "poke holes in some of the arguments" and cast the proposal as a "complete boondoggle." And as discussed earlier, while there may have been potential for economic development and transit-oriented development, the attention that these discussions garnered may have put the proposal under deeper scrutiny. The transportation planner I spoke with was positive about the potential for development near the stations, but was also aware that some people were a bit more "sensationalist" about the potential of KRM in terms of creating lots of jobs, and solving additional problems.

In the wake of Rubin and Poole's (2008) report, economic development began to be a topic of discussion in the media. McIlheran (2008) and Hollenbeck (2009) focused on how much commuter rail would cost and questioned if rail was really going to lead to increased economic development. *Biz Times Milwaukee* (2008) coverage was more factual and included comment from Ken Yunker of SEWRPC who backed the findings from the 2007 University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee study and refuted the criticisms of the Rubin and Poole study. And Rice (2009) discussed Rubin's scheduled appearance in Milwaukee in mid-January 2009, where he would discuss his study and help people to

make an "informed decision" about the KRM proposal (Rice, 2009). Rubin and Poole's report made economic development a subject of discussion, but not in the way that proponents had hoped.

Overall, the 2007 University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee economic impact study changed the way proponents framed the discussion about KRM, but once the 2008 report by Rubin and Poole was released this framing of the discussion around economic benefits caused the proposal to come under deeper scrutiny. In the end, all of this discussion about the KRM's costs and questionable economic benefits began to cast doubt in the eyes of the public and left many to question not only the economic benefits of KRM, but also if KRM commuter rail was right for southeast Wisconsin.

Some of the economic development debate was less focused on transit-oriented development at station locations, and more focused on regional connections to the greater Chicago area and the economic development potential this meant for the region (Mariano, 2006). Throughout my analysis the connection to Chicago was seen as a large part of the discourse. As the transit advocate I interviewed discussed, the connection to Chicago was huge for KRM, especially for Racine since they lacked a rail connection to the economic powerhouse in the Chicago area. As I observed throughout the research this meant capitalizing on the economic development engine in Chicago and northern Illinois to foster new development here in Wisconsin. KRM was seen as a way for southeast Wisconsin to remain competitive in the market for new businesses and industry (Mariano, 2006). Furthermore, KRM would fill the void left by Amtrak service between Milwaukee and Chicago focusing on the suburb-to-suburb trips and city-to-suburb trips that are not part of the Amtrak market (Sandler, 2003). This new type of service would

make it easier for commuters to access jobs in the communities of northern Illinois, and for Milwaukee and Racine jobs to be more accessible to commuters in northern Illinois.

The communities along the KRM route consciously studied and planned for transit-oriented developments around station locations (SEWRPC, 2011b). A look at the SEWRPC archives revealed that all of the communities with stops along the route had completed transit-oriented development proposals with a variety of approaches, but all focusing on higher density and pedestrian access to the station (SEWRPC, 2007b). Some of the communities chose to use different types of developmental incentives including Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, or the expansion of current Business Improvement Districts (BID's), while other communities chose to leave it up to the open market (SEWRPC, 2007b). While different approaches were used, all had the goal of increasing economic development. As both the transportation planner and transit advocates I interviewed discussed, transit-oriented development plans for the station locations was a huge focus of the initial research on the KRM proposal. The specific plans for each station considered the local context, and the development goals of the community like the examples from Washington D.C. But as was also learned from the example of D.C., transit-oriented development near the stations in the urban areas of Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha would fit in with the local urban context, whereas development in the more suburban or rural station locations could mean isolated islands of transit-oriented development in a sea of auto-centric development; which does very little to increase transit ridership.

We now turn to a look at the specific development seen for the major urban centers of Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee. The areas near these stations stood out

because the surrounding areas were already conducive to transit-oriented development as they were planned in the pre-automobile age (Southeastern Regional Transit Authority, 2010).

The visions for possible transit-oriented development were widely discussed for Milwaukee's downtown station. The research process showed that the area at the south end of downtown was seen as a prime area for redevelopment, especially as it relates to KRM. A study of the station on West St. Paul Avenue predicted a very different look for the area by 2020 (Ryan, 2006). The area would be transformed as the development of the booming Third Ward to the east met with the station development. St. Paul Avenue would be transformed with high density multi-story buildings with apartments and condos on top of ground floor retail. The sidewalks would become more pedestrian-friendly through beautification and safety updates. The area could have thousands of new residential units and millions of square feet of commercial space available by 2035. What I gathered from my analysis was that this area would be transformed, and would (re)develop the south end of downtown.

The City of Racine had a lot to gain with the introduction of KRM commuter rail. My analysis revealed that Racine business leaders and local officials were hopeful for the potential economic development impact of KRM. These leaders saw commuter rail as vital to the future of Racine's economy and argued that transit options such as KRM have continually proven to "revitalize communities, enhance economic development, and most importantly, serve to create new jobs and connect workers to existing jobs" (Racine Journal Times, 2010). What this shows is how the city was depending on KRM service to drive economic development and provide needed connections to the economies of

Milwaukee and Chicago. As Racine Mayor John Dickert stated, "To rebuild a city like Racine, you have to have infrastructure . . . you have to have an effective and efficient transit system" (Rigney-Baxter, 2010).

Racine-based SC Johnson saw commuter rail as a way to attract young professionals to their company (Grundle, 2006). This is something Rosemary Potter, executive director of Transit NOW, agreed with citing studies that show "young talent will go where commuter rail is located" (Grundle, 2006). In my assessment, SC Johnson saw the commuter rail as important for attracting the right kind of employees to work at their headquarters. The transit advocate I interviewed argued that S.C Johnson made commuter rail a priority. They attended budget hearings, and lobbied in Madison because they saw the value in KRM commuter rail, not only in terms of economic development, but also with the regional connections to Milwaukee and Chicago. Having a large international company advocating for KRM highlighted the importance of the proposal for the region, and Racine specifically.

The downtown Racine Business Improvement District saw KRM as a way to increase business activity, and keep local businesses thriving (Downtown Racine Business Improvement District No. 1, 2011). With a vested interest in keeping downtown Racine a vibrant place for shopping, dining, and other activities the prospects for economic development surrounding the station was a huge priority for the downtown Racine businesses. As the transit advocate I interviewed discussed, the Racine station had the potential to revive an area of the city near the proposed station. Likewise, Joel Rast, Professor of Political Science and Urban Studies, and the director of the Center for Economic Development at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, argued that the KRM

commuter rail proposal would likely help Racine even more than it would Milwaukee (Steinkraus, 2011). I see the evidence as clear; Racine was counting on the KRM to create economic development both near the station and to stimulate development throughout the city. The connection to both Milwaukee and Chicago had a huge potential to revive the economy in the city.

The City of Kenosha knew the benefits of transit-oriented development through the construction of their Harbor Park development, which was specifically tied to the Metra station in Kenosha (Transit NOW, 2012). There were certainly expectations for future development near the station and continued economic development in the area once the KRM line was also tied to the station. My research showed that Kenosha was ready to expand upon their economic development agenda, especially in the station area, even before the future of KRM was certain. In-fact the city took on the task of renovating their century old station by raising money on their own and applying for their own federal money separate from the KRM proposal (Rohde, 2010).

The expectations of regional transit cooperation were also tied up in the debate about KRM. As the public policy analyst I interviewed argued, KRM was about more than just the operation of a commuter rail line, it was also about the creation of an RTA serving Milwaukee, Racine, and Kenosha Counties. When then-Governor Doyle introduced the legislation for regions to create transit authorities he was hopeful that this would allow them to come together and work on the transit issues facing their specific areas (Transit NOW, n.d.). The transit advocate I interviewed saw KRM as "a platform for our region to start working together" and gave new hope to the creation of an RTA. However, I argue that the vision for the way these RTA's would have been structured

may have been beyond the capabilities of southeast Wisconsin. All of my interviewees indicated that, local leaders were hopeful that KRM would bring about the creation of an RTA as a solution to the funding crisis of local bus systems; as I see it none of them had the political will to get it done.

The policy analyst I spoke with discussed how then Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker was supportive of the idea of an RTA and even tried to pull Waukesha County in as part of it. The transit advocate I spoke with clarified how, although this bill did not include Waukesha County, they would have been able to join under certain conditions. The prospect of bringing Waukesha County into the RTA was monumental, considering the legacy of the east-west corridor debate. However, the public policy analyst clarified that Waukesha County officials were not in support, so that idea quickly went by the wayside. The policy analyst argued that the fundamental reason why Walker was not against KRM at first was the prospect of an RTA that could help support a struggling MCTS. But as became clear in my analysis, his staunch opposition to a transit sales tax to fund local buses showed that he supported an RTA in concept but, when it came to the reality of paying for it, his support waned. In addition, the transit advocate I interviewed argued that Waukesha County officials were influenced to not join the RTA because of the falsehoods articulated by Robin Vos and his cohorts. In my estimation, this was the moment when the talk of regional transit cooperation turned divisive and KRM's future became questionable.

The transportation planner I spoke with felt that SERTA was not only essential for KRM to be funded and operated, but that it was also a key expectation of the proposal. The transportation planner also felt that ultimately the dissolving of SERTA,

and other RTA's in the state, was the primary reason for the KRM's "indefinite postponement." However, as my analysis has shown there are several other key decisions by individual actors along the way that paved the way for the proposals failure.

Throughout my analysis it became clear that the biggest expectation of KRM was the creation of an RTA - an RTA that could have supplied both local busses and regional commuter rail with dedicated funding sources and finally link the region with transit service that would have been "easy, convenient and reliable" (Transit NOW, 2012). This expectation became the largest issue attached with KRM and transit advocates, policy analysts and planners agreed. However, this expectation could have also spelled its demise since those against the proposal knew that KRM was attached to the larger goal of regional transit cooperation, something opponents maintained would lead to loss of local control and the funneling of funds towards the needs of other counties. Then Governor Doyle vetoed the Milwaukee Transit Authority proposed after SERTA was unable to come to a consensus on a funding mechanism for KRM and the local bus systems. This seemed to be the best hope for a regional funding consensus, especially in light of earlier debates.

Let's refer back to the earlier examples of Atlanta (Golembiewsi & Kiepper, 1976) and south Florida (Alpert et al., 2006), where the final reality of regional transit cooperation looked very different from their original visions. The structure of the compromise for the KRM and SERTA was very similar to the example of south Florida with each county keeping local funding autonomy for their local systems, and there being a separate funding source for the regional rail system. Along with this, Ulberg's models of regional transit cooperation (as cited in Meligrana, 1999) are also significant to KRM

in understanding the degree of integration seen in southeast Wisconsin, and the possibilities for coordination. To review, Ulberg's hierarchy consisted of: complete independence, informal coordination, formal coordination, partial integration, and full integration. The bus systems in Milwaukee County and the cities of Kenosha and Racine would most likely be considered in the category of "complete independence," with most service stopping at the County lines in the example of MCTS or city boundaries in Kenosha and Racine. It is possible that the compromise vetoed by then-Governor Doyle (and also seen in the example of south Florida) could have moved the region closer to goal of complete integration and could have been considered "partial integration," with a regional agency coordinating transit and, in the case of KRM, operating the service, while the local systems would be run independently and the two systems interacting at transfer stations.

When viewing KRM (and SERTA) and the compromise that came out of the legislature through Ulberg's hierarchy, it is easy to see the change in regional cooperation that was part of this compromise. Viewing the issue of regional transit coordination as a hierarchy as well as through the examples of other transit agencies, one can get a clearer vision of what regional transit coordination can look like compared to what it was previously, and the different ways it can work. I argue that if then-Governor Doyle had considered the alternative approaches to regional transit cooperation seen in Atlanta and south Florida, or if he had considered the major steps up the regional transit hierarchy that the compromise brought southeast Wisconsin, KRM could be running today and local buses would be funded with dedicated funding sources.

As I see it, KRM had two predominant expectations. First was the provision of economic development and transit-oriented development at the station locations and throughout the entire region. And second, but probably most important, was the creation of a Regional Transit Authority and agreement over regional transit issues.

Unfortunately, KRM would never accomplish either, and perhaps the expectation of one 33-mile long commuter rail line to bring about regional transit cooperation and expansive economic development was more than should have been expected. KRM was expected to transform the south end of downtown Milwaukee near the station, reinvigorate the struggling economy of Racine, and expand upon Kenosha's vibrant transit-oriented developments. In addition KRM was to bring about cooperation between three counties with varying demographics, and lifestyles. I argue that it was not only the expectation of creating an RTA, but what that RTA was supposed to look like that doomed KRM. The example of south Florida's RTA provides parallels to the KRM proposal. Both involved three counties connecting major population centers and both had a struggle with the provision of an RTA to serve the entire area. I believe that if then-Governor Doyle had not vetoed the separate Milwaukee Transit Authority that was to fund and run MCTS and have KRM remain separate, the Milwaukee area would have a similar set-up to the south Florida RTA and could be running today. In the end, the expectations for economic development that were highly scrutinized as part of the shift in politics in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, and Governor Doyle's expectation for the type of regional transit cooperation he wanted to see were important factors in the demise of the KRM proposal.

4. Funding Issues for KRM

This section looks at the role of funding in the failure of the KRM proposal. My analysis showed that funding played a role in the KRM proposal's failure in three key ways: the large amount of public funding the KRM would require, the federal funding requirements, and the local funding obstacles.

Early on, it became clear that KRM would require a large amount of public funding to cover capital costs as well as operating costs. With total KRM capital costs estimated to be about \$230 million (Ryan, 2010c), with some estimates as high as \$250 million (Rubin and Poole, 2008), and a low operating cost recovery rate (the amount of costs recovered by fares) of 15-17% (SEWRPC, 2003), funding was sure to be an obstacle for KRM. This funding dilemma, however, was not unique to KRM, as other new commuter rail systems had similar cost recovery figures (SEWRPC, 2003). More established systems typically boast recovery rates of around 40-60%. Reflecting back on Altshuler and Luberoff's (2003) earlier discussion of transit funding and remembering the structure of transit funding in the 1950s, we are reminded how transit used to be expected to recover all of its costs from fares, which explains why this cost recovery figure is so important to the viability of new proposals. Neoliberal devolution also plays into this, where federal transportation legislation continues to subsidize highway infrastructure costs at a higher rate than transit, leaving state and local governments to cover a larger percentage of transit project expenses.

SERTA was applying for the federal government's "New Starts" program which could have covered as much as 60% of the costs of construction for KRM (Thoreson, 2010). As discussed earlier, the New Starts program was a federally funded program for

new fixed guideway transit service available to local and regional authorities on a competitive basis (Lowe, 2013). SERTA and SEWRPC knew that securing this funding was essential for the proposal to move forward. SEWRPC was optimistic that Wisconsin could get this funding even given that the state had never before received federal money for a proposal such as this, as the process tended to favor larger urban centers like New York, Houston, and Los Angeles (Thoreson, 2010).

During the application process, the FTA voiced concerns about the KRM proposal because a dedicated source of funding was not secured for the local bus systems in Milwaukee County and the cities of Racine and Kenosha (Sandler, 2010c). The FTA said they would allow preliminary engineering, but that funding for the final stages of the proposal would be held until the funding issues were resolved. The transportation planner I spoke with agreed that the FTA voiced concerns about local funding of buses and that SEWRPC actually pulled their initial application in 2007 for the New Starts Program because of these concerns. So while federal funding was potentially available to cover a large amount of the capital costs of KRM, the proposal was hampered by the issues of local funding that had to be figured out before KRM could move any further.

The transportation planner I interviewed argued that the issue of funding for transit is unique in the Milwaukee area since funding is largely dependent on the state and federal governments. This funding has not increased with inflation leaving counties and local governments to fill the gap using property taxes. Therefore, the biggest issue for funding with the KRM was finding a dedicated funding source.

Many local funding proposals for KRM were floated around including additional gas taxes, state funding (Sandler, 2004), using the sales tax revenue from vehicle

purchases (Walker, 2007), or an overall sales tax increase anywhere from .05% to 0.5% (Resler, 2006), and finally an increase of the car rental fee by \$13 (Grundle, 2007). While each of these solutions was debated in the media, SERTA focused on the car rental fee and sales taxes. Each of these solutions had their benefits and drawbacks, but my analysis showed that the car rental fee increase had the most vocal backlash.

Car-rental companies came out against the car rental fee saying it would hurt their business by driving away customers and could force them to reduce staffing (Ryan, 2009a). The transportation planner I spoke with also discussed the pushback from the rental car industry itself. It was clear from the research that car rental companies felt targeted and feared the repercussions of these extra fees. There was even a bill introduced in congress that would prevent local and federal governments from imposing such fees. Those in support of the bill, including consumer advocacy groups, auto manufacturers and rental agencies, said that these fees should not go to "funding projects that have nothing to do with renting vehicles" (Sandler & Marrero, 2010). Despite this vocal backlash, however, the car rental fee remained part of the funding mechanism for KRM.

The idea of a regional sales tax seemed the consensus way to go. As one Racine citizen stated in the Feb. 2, 2007 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, "A small extra tax to build and operate this KRM commuter rail line is not asking a great deal from the general public" (Myers, 2007). However, political support for a transit tax was difficult. State Senator John Lehman of Racine said that the voters in his district would never approve of a sales tax to support transit (Ryan, 2009b) and Milwaukee County Executive Walker, as described earlier, was also opposed to a sales tax to support transit.

One thing became clear throughout my analysis - Milwaukee County officials were particularly important in the debate over funding, since they were concerned about funding going directly to KRM and not helping the struggling Milwaukee County Transit System (Ryan, 2007a). One of the goals in establishing SERTA was that a regional source of funding would be identified for KRM, which could also to help support local bus systems. In May of 2007 SERTA officials decided on a \$13 car rental fee increase to fund KRM and a 0.5% sales tax to fund local transit, but the sales tax increase was later tabled leaving only the car rental fee (Ryan, 2007b). This provided funding for KRM, but not for local bus systems. Subsequently, the \$13 car rental fee was denied by the state legislature as a funding source, and the RTA legislation that created SERTA as a temporary authority did not pass so funding was again on hold (Transit NOW, n.d.). In my view, despite support for the proposal from residents and many local officials, state politics played into the funding for KRM and an RTA, where the proposal was supported in principle but not in practice.

In Milwaukee, voters narrowly approved an advisory referendum in support of a 1% sales tax increase to pay for transit as well as other services (Ryan, 2009b). This meant that a sales tax in Milwaukee could be initiated to fund transit. Similar measures in Racine and Kenosha failed by large margins with 80% of Racine voters and up to 88% of Kenosha County voters opposing a sales tax to fund transit (Sandler, 2010b). So while Milwaukee voters understood the need for dedicated funding for transit, Racine and Kenosha County residents were soundly against this measure. As the transit advocate I spoke with argued, the people of Milwaukee are generally supportive of transit, but the surrounding suburban counties do not appreciate it and don't want to pay for it. This

points to another interesting phenomenon found throughout my research - the urban versus rural divide that was a huge factor in determining funding for KRM. In the end, Milwaukee County was prepared to levy a sales tax to fund transit, while Kenosha and Racine were not.

The 2009-2011 state budget, signed on June 29, 2009, established SERTA as a permanent RTA and allowed them to fund and operate KRM commuter rail using the rental car fee (Transit NOW, n.d.). This measure should have put KRM over its final hurdle and the proposal should have been ready to move forward, but as we will see, the continued debate over a regional funding solution for KRM and local buses became the real issue. The transit planner I interviewed explained how the Joint Finance Committee divided SERTA (and KRM) from local bus funding, forming the Milwaukee Transit Authority. This would allow Milwaukee County to levy a local tax to support MCTS, outside of the regional framework for KRM (Sander, 2010e). However, the governor vetoed the proposed Milwaukee Transit Authority citing his desire for a regional solution. I argue that this move, on the part of Governor Doyle would prove to be more significant than he had anticipated.

As the transit advocate I spoke with argued, Doyle probably thought that it wouldn't be a big deal for the counties to come up with a regional solution for funding buses and the KRM together under one mechanism. What I don't think he considered was that this may have been the best compromise on which local officials could agree. I also argue that he was completely unaware of the scrutiny passenger rail would face in the upcoming 2010 Governor's race, and how it would affect the funding for an RTA.

The veto meant that SERTA could continue progress on the KRM, but that dedicated funding for local bus systems had not been agreed upon. However, this was not enough to keep the KRM moving forward, since a good commuter rail system needs a good local bus system to serve as a feeder. Funding for local buses was very important, a point with which the transit advocate I interviewed also agreed. Unfortunately, an April 22, 2010 *Daily Reporter* article indicated that the debate over a sales tax for transit would be put off for another year (Ryan, 2010b); which would move the issue into a new political climate under the Governorship of Scott Walker and a Republican-dominated legislature.

All three of the individuals I interviewed agreed that funding for KRM was wrapped up in the larger issue of funding for local bus systems, especially MCTS. The transportation planner discussed how SERTA board members were worried about the funding of what they called a "shiny new train" when local bus systems were struggling.

In summary, funding for KRM was a concern, especially given the low fare-recovery rate and high initial capital costs of the proposal. Soon funding was also attached to the need to stabilize the funding issues of the local bus systems, especially MCTS. For KRM to be successful, local bus connections were essential to get riders to their final destinations. But the region just could not come up with a consensus for how to fund KRM and local buses together as the counties kept fighting against each other instead of working with each other. The RTA legislation that came out of the Joint Finance Committee separated funding for MCTS from the KRM proposal, something that Governor Doyle vetoed; a move which I argue made the future of KRM uncertain. Now KRM funding was secured, but funding for the buses was in question with pressure

looming from the FTA to have the dedicated funding secured before the proposal could move beyond preliminary engineering.

5. KRM and the Light Rail Debate

This section addresses the question of the impact of the previous light rail debate (and the larger east-west corridor debate) on the failure of the KRM proposal. My analysis revealed that the light rail debate impacted the KRM proposal in three key ways: labeling commuter rail as a better alternative to light rail, the connections between the two proposals, and the different approaches taken.

Throughout my analysis it became clear that the light rail debate left behind a legacy of opposition, and somehow KRM seemed to be able to avoid this. As Larry Sandler from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported, the idea of commuter rail brought widespread support and didn't have to contend with the same level of resistance as light rail proposals (Sandler, 2003). The public policy analyst I interviewed argued that, "KRM came about and almost happened as a direct result of what happened with the east-west corridor." In the beginning stages of the KRM proposal, those that were opposed to light rail because of the expense involved saw commuter rail as a better alternative. And as the transportation planner I spoke with argued, those who understood the different purposes of light rail and commuter rail never connected the two proposals and judged them on their own merits. So perhaps the legacy of the light rail debate was positive for the KRM, at least in the way it framed the issue of commuter rail as a better alternative to light rail. However, as the public policy analyst argued, soon all rail turned politically divisive and became something conservatives did not support. Similarly, the transportation planner

discussed how those that were just anti-rail connected the two proposals into a larger framework of passenger rail as being unnecessary.

The proposals did have a few connections in terms of their demise, their goal of regional cooperation, and their connection in a broader debate about passenger rail. In both cases, while funding seemed to be the issue that was debated; the actual demise of both proposals was decided by Republican officials making a conscious decision to stop each of the rail proposals in their tracks. In the case of light rail, Waukesha County Executive Finley killed light rail by vetoing further study of the east-west corridor. In the case of KRM the Republican dominated legislature disbanded all of the state's regional transit authorities (RTA), taking away the power of the SERTA board to fund and operate the KRM line. However, as my analysis of the KRM has revealed, the actions of other political figures put the future of the KRM proposal in question long before this legislative action.

Both proposals were also part of the larger issue of regional transit cooperation. While the light rail was about cooperation between Waukesha and Milwaukee counties, the KRM was about cooperation between Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha counties and any other county that wanted to join the RTA. But the proposals were still impacted by the larger issues of political polarization and urban versus rural lifestyles in the region; themes that I saw through my research on both light rail and KRM. The transit advocate I spoke with pointed to these issues of Milwaukee versus the suburbs that were common in both debates. The mere fact that regional cooperation for transit in southeast Wisconsin has now failed twice is indicative of the divisiveness of these issues and will continue to be the legacy of both proposals. Additionally, as argued earlier the compromise that came

out of the east-west corridor set a precedent for the regional transportation priorities of southeast Wisconsin.

The east-west corridor debate also relates to the KRM debate in that the Milwaukee streetcar proposal is slated to connect with the Milwaukee Intermodal Station, where the KRM would have terminated, in downtown Milwaukee. And so, in many ways the two proposals became linked, along with high-speed rail from Chicago to Minneapolis through Milwaukee and Madison, as wasteful big-government projects that would become nothing but a tax-burden. And in my opinion, had the KRM commuter rail been established, the future of the Milwaukee streetcar line would be bright; since it would help connect commuters terminating at the downtown train station to the rest of downtown Milwaukee. As Kris Martinsek said in a July 26, 2003 *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* article, "I think the biggest tragedy would be if these two projects [light rail and commuter rail] ended up getting pitted against one another" (Sandler, 2003). And while they were never pitted against each other, I do see the legacy of the east-west corridor debate as something that KRM had to contend with.

As pointed out in my interview with the transit advocate, the two proposals also differed in their approach. My interviewee explained how light rail, "could have gotten a lot further had there been a more reasonable strategy of education up-front." The transit advocate pointed out how the first few years of KRM was for educating the public, meeting with business people, doing presentations and merely getting the information out. I see this as perhaps a positive outcome of the light rail debate, where a change in approach was seen as the best way to move KRM forward. The light rail skipped this important step and so the public wasn't informed and the debate was less about the facts

and more about the ideologies of the Waukesha County Republicans and Milwaukee mayor John Norquist. Unfortunately, the KRM would be hampered with the falsehoods touted by the opposition, a backlash that proponents didn't see coming. Perhaps the strategy difference only worked to a limited extent, as the same debates about rail came back to the surface.

The earlier debate on light rail in Milwaukee had a profound influence on the KRM proposal but not necessarily in the way I had initially thought. The KRM commuter rail proposal might have actually been helped by the earlier light rail debate in terms of having support as a better transit alternative and also being approached in a more grassroots way. While the transportation planner I spoke with didn't see the two as necessarily related and the transit advocate mainly saw a difference in the approaches of the proposals, there are still some important links between the proposals. The two proposals took place at different times, served different corridors and provided different services, but they are linked to the broader context of passenger rail in Wisconsin that has a history of divisiveness. Both were victims of decisions by Republican leaders, and both were discussed in terms of the creation of an RTA. Additionally, both had the constraints of political polarization, contrasting lifestyles, and regional feuds about transit funding. And even though this legacy still followed the KRM, my analysis showed that the KRM was able to still move forward despite these obstacles. While the legacy of the light rail debate is still prominent, it appears that KRM was able to overcome the hurdles faced by light rail. And I argue that KRM could have moved forward despite (and possibly because of) the legacy light rail left behind.

Conclusion

In the end, I conclude that while one specific legislative action on the part of a Republican-dominated legislature may have officially killed the proposal (or put it on hold indefinitely as two of my interviewees suggested) - this action was simply one event in a broader political debate about KRM and its funding and expectations. This is not to discount the influence of an auto-dominated culture, or the legacy of the light rail debate; but as my analysis showed, the proposal could have (and most likely would have) moved forward despite these issues.

KRM found itself within the economic context of a political shift that took place in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, and the broader local debate about funding for KRM and local bus systems. In addition, the highly touted economic development forecasts were questioned and left opponents to challenge the viability of KRM. Representative Robin Vos became a vocal opponent of the proposal, which as some argued was a product of the inclusion of western Racine County in the funding scope of SERTA (and KRM). However, the largest obstacle to the KRM proposal was the veto by Governor Doyle of the RTA compromise that would have let KRM move forward and provided dedicated funding for local buses. The expectation of a fully regional solution on the part of the Governor, I argue, was more than southeast Wisconsin was capable of, given the ideological division of the past. The KRM also entered into the Republican gubernatorial primary where opposition to the KRM became a conservative campaigning requirement and then came to the forefront of the 2010 gubernatorial race. But by this time, KRM was already "on life support" and the final nail in the coffin came after Scott Walker took office with the legislature dissolving the state's RTAs.

So while the legislature's decision to dissolve all the state's RTAs is seen as the official demise of KRM, I argue that earlier political moves on the part of politicians on both sides of the aisle put the future of KRM in question. It was the decision of the Milwaukee County Board to insist on the inclusion of western Racine County in the funding scope of the RTA and Doyle's expectation of what the funding mechanisms and structure of an RTA should look like (as opposed to what is feasible in the local context), that was flawed. It was not divisive or partisan politics that killed the KRM, but politics that did not consider compromise.

Lessons Learned

This research led me to three important issues from the KRM proposal's failure that could provide lessons learned for future passenger rail proposals: the importance of how the proposal is framed, the influence of individual actors, and that politics isn't necessarily partisan.

The KRM commuter rail proposal was framed as an economic development driver and as the solution to the mobility issues of southeast Wisconsin. The 1997 economic impact report boasted of job creation, expanded tourism, increased property values, and increased economic development from the KRM, but these claims were refuted by conservative researchers. As argued by the policy analyst I interviewed, the economic claims seen in the report and heralded by proponents may have actually led the KRM to be put under deeper scrutiny by conservatives and anti-rail groups. Along with this is the way KRM was framed as the key to solving the mobility issues of the region. However, soon support from Republicans and Democrats alike began to wane as low ridership figures of 1.7 million annual riders were discussed and as many officials,

especially in Milwaukee, feared that local bus systems would end up suffering if KRM was to move forward. The lesson learned here for future passenger rail proposals is the importance of how the proposal is framed. In the case of KRM, the way it was framed put the project under deeper scrutiny and factored into the failure of the KRM proposal.

Another lesson learned from KRM was the influence of individual actors. While KRM is not necessarily unique in how individual actors influenced the progress of the proposal, it does highlight the large number of competing individual agendas that all worked in different ways and in varying degrees to kill the KRM proposal. Robin Vos, while never showing support for the KRM, didn't initially publically oppose the proposal. Then as a product of the changing political tide, he became one of the most vocal opponents of KRM. Scott Walker initially supported KRM because of the possibility of forming an RTA, but changed his stance as the political tide shifted, but also likely because of his shift from a Republican leader in a Democratic County to running for state-wide office. Members of the Milwaukee County Board such as Michael Mayo and Lee Holloway, along with Representative Gwen Moore and Mayor Tom Barrett, were concerned about what KRM would mean for the already struggling MCTS. However, most important to this discussion is Governor Jim Doyle who vetoed the RTA compromise that came out of the legislature, citing his desire for a more regional solution. And while his desire for a more regional solution had its merits, the expectation for the type of regional transit authority that he wanted was a decisive moment in the fate of the KRM proposal. The lesson to be learned here is that, when you look at why the proposal failed, you get a closer view of the individual actors involved and how their competing agendas stopped the proposal from moving forward.

Finally, one of the most interesting lessons to be learned from the KRM proposal's failure is that the politics surrounding the proposal was not necessarily partisan. While there was ideological polarization attached to the politics of KRM, it seemed to be more about local issues and personal political agenda's than Republican versus Democrat. There were several Democrats in Milwaukee, a traditional Democratic stronghold, who had their reservations about the KRM, such as Representative Gwen Moore, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, and members of the Milwaukee County Board. These Milwaukee leaders were concerned over funding for MCTS but also if KRM was in the best interest of Milwaukee and its residents. Democratic Governor Jim Doyle, while supportive of KRM, seemed more concerned with his vision of the structure of an RTA than with the repercussions that his veto on the RTA compromise would have on the future of KRM. So while it would be easy to blame the fate of the KRM proposal on Republican law-makers and partisan politics, the evidence shows that the failure of KRM is more a product of competing political agendas and divisions over local issues than it was about partisan politics. The lesson learned here is that politics is not always partisan, and in the case of KRM became much more about competing individual interests and agenda's than Republican versus Democrat, or conservative versus liberal.

Further Research

While I feel my interviews with three key stakeholders in the proposal, and a thorough analysis of archival and newspaper sources was sufficient to answer the research questions I set out to answer, further research into the KRM proposal could and should be completed to look at a wider range of issues attached to the proposal. This could include interviews or surveys of transit riders who depend on transit and how this

proposal would have affected them, or interviews or surveys of potential riders of the KRM and their feelings on the proposal. In addition, talking to the business community, such as SC Johnson and other businesses in the corridor, and getting their perspective on KRM and how it would have benefitted them, would be helpful. Additionally, I did not explore the influence of factors such as race, ethnicity or poverty; or the reason(s) why this corridor was chosen. Finally, I am hopeful that scholars from a variety of disciplines will continue to study the failure of passenger rail proposals to understand why they failed and how future proposals can be approached.

References

- Alpert, L., Gainsborough, J., & Wallis, A. (2006). Building the Capacity to Act Regionally: Formation of the Regional Transportation Authority in South Florida. *Urban Affairs Review*, 42 (2), 143-168.
- Altshuler, A. (1979). *The Urban Transportation System: Politics and Policy Innovation*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Altshuler, A. & Luberoff, D. (2003). *Mega-Projects: The Changing Politics of Urban Public Investment*. Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Alvord, K. (2000). *Divorce Your Car! Ending the Love Affair with the Automobile*. Gabriola Island, B.C., Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Bergman, A., Gliebe, J., & Strathman, J. (2011). Modeling Access Mode Choice for Inter-Suburban Commuter Rail. *Journal of Public Transportation*, 14 (4), 23-42.
- Bipartisan Policy Center. (2011). Strategies for Defining the Core Federal Role in Surface Transportation. Energy & Infrastructure Program, National Transportation Policy Project. Retrieved from http://bipartisanpolicy.org/sites/default/files/NTPP%20Paper_0.pdf
- Biz Times Milwaukee. (2008, December 16). Libertarian group says KRM's benefits are overstated. *Biz Times Milwaukee*. Retrieved from <http://www.biztimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20081216/ENEWSLETTER/S02/312169990/image1.gif/&template=printart>
- Blainey, S., Hickford, A. & Preston, J. (2012). Barriers to Passenger Rail Use: A Review of the Evidence. *Transport Reviews*, 32 (6), 675-696.
- Bowen, D. J. (2008). Chicago: Passenger Rail Hub. *Railway Age*. June, 19-23.
- . (2011). Rail Transit Taps Local Powers. *Railway Age*. September, 83-89.
- Bullard, R., Torres, A. & Johnson, G. (2000). *Sprawl City: Race, Politics and Planning in Atlanta*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 52-59.
- Burke, M. (2007a, May 30). Business backs Lehman, pressures Vos on KRM proposal. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/local/business-backs-lehman-pressures-vos-on-krm-proposal/article_e6348ffd-4364-5bd9-9c8e-c5f5644567d2.html
- . (2007b, February 7). Study: Commuter rail would have 'substantial' economic impact. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/local/study-commuter-rail-would-have-substantial-economic-impact/article_5f569de0-1612-59bf-bd3b-44100b05e37e.html

- Cameron, M. (1997). Transportation Efficiency and Equity in Southern California: Are They Compatible? In R. Bullard & G. Johnson's, *Just Transportation: Dismantling Race and Class Barriers to Mobility*, 53-67.
- Casey, J., Jr. (1995). The Politics of Congestion and Implementation: Milwaukee's Freeways and the Proposed Light Rail and Transit System. *Marquette Law Review*, 78, 675-733.
- . (1998). Bridging the Great Divide: SEWRPC, Politics, and Regional Cooperation. *Marquette Law Review*, 81 (3), 705-760.
- Cervero, R. (1998). *The Transit Metropolis: A Global Inquiry*. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- . (2006). Transit Oriented Development's Ridership Bonus: A Product of Self-Selection and Public Policies. University of California Transportation Center, Berkeley.
- Cervero, R., & Duncan, M. (2002). Benefits of Proximity to Rail on Housing Markets: Experiences in Santa Clara County. *Journal of Public Transportation*, 5 (1), 1-18.
- Downtown Racine Business Improvement District No. 1. (2011, May 24). Commentary: We urge Joint Finance Committee to restore transit funding. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/commentary-we-urge-joint-finance-committee-to-restore-transit-funding/article_a4fb243c-86eb-11e0-bcc7-001cc4c03286.html
- Envirodyne Engineers, Inc. (1993). *Chicago-Milwaukee Rail Corridor Study, Phase I Report*, Presented to: Wisconsin Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Transportation.
- Forster, S. (2009, September 11). Neumann questions viability of commuter rail line. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/?sterms=PUBLICATION%28Milwaukee+journal+sentinel%29&verb=sr&csi=299488>
- Goddard, S. (1996). *Getting There: The Epic Struggle Between Road and Rail in the American Century*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Golembiewski, R. & Kiepper, A. (1976). MARTA: Toward An Effective, Open Giant. *Public Administration Review*. January/February, 46-60.
- Grava, S. (2003). *Urban Transportation Systems: Choices for Communities*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Graham, A. L. (2013). Fort Worth Ready for commuter rail, consultant says. *Fort Worth Business Press*, February 25-March 3, 12.

- Grundle, J. (2006, March 2). Groups voice support for passenger rail in southeastern Wisconsin. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2006/03/01/groups-voice-support-for-passenger-rail/>
- . (2007, May 16). Alderman proposes extending Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail line. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2007/05/16/alderman-proposes-extending-krm-line/>
- Gutfreund, O. (2004). *Twentieth Century Sprawl: Highways and the Reshaping of the American Landscape*. New York: Oxford University Press, kindle edition.
- Harvey, D. (2007). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, P. (2010). *Master Planners: Fifty Years of Regional Planning in Southeastern Wisconsin: 1960-2010*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press.
- Hollenbeck, R. (2009, January 2). KRM economic benefits aren't credible study states. *CudahyNOW* [blogs]. Retrieved from <http://www.cudahynow.com/blogs/communityblogs/44049037.html>
- Interrante, J. (1983). The Road to Autopia: The Automobile and the Spatial Transformation of American Culture in D. Lewis and L. Goldstein (Eds.), *The Automobile and American Culture* (pp. 89-104). Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Institute for Survey & Policy Research. (2007). Community Economic Impact Study of the Proposed Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) Commuter Rail. University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.
- Institute of Public Administration. (1979). *Financing Transit: Alternatives for Local Government*. Prepared for: U.S. Department of Transportation.
- Jackson, K. (1985). *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, N. A. (2014). Off Track: The Failure of Light-Rail in Milwaukee. *e.polis*, online student journal of Urban Studies. University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Volume VI, Winter 2014. Available at <http://www4.uwm.edu/letsci/urbanstudies/epolis/current/upload/LightRailSubmission.pdf>
- Jones, D. W. (2008). *Mass Motorization + Mass Transit: An American History and Policy Analysis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Jones, S. (2011, February 28). Regional transit authority next on GOP chopping block - Without RTA, KRM would stall. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/local/regional-transit-authority-next-on-gop-chopping-block-/article_b3d3994c-439a-11e0-b4c3-001cc4c03286.html

- Lang, J. (2005). Challenges to the Urban Growth Machine: The Case of Light Rail in Milwaukee (Unpublished Master's Thesis). University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.
- Levinson, H., Allen, J. G. & Hoey, W. F. (2012). Light Rail Since World War II: Abandonments, Survivals and Revivals. *Journal of Urban Technology*, 19 (1), 65-79.
- Lowe, K. (2013). Funding Rail: Federal Decisions and Local Financing. *Public Works Management & Policy*. January.
- Lyles, W. (2007, March 22). Cooperation is needed to end feud. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20070322&id=3uIqAAAAI BAJ&sjid=qkUEAAAAI BAJ&pg=4185,880126>
- Mariano, R. (2006, February 23). Commuter rail in region will pay off. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20060223&id=CR8eAAAAI BAJ&sjid=K44EAAAAI BAJ&pg=4806,1809368>
- Marley, P. (2011, May 3). Budget committee votes to eliminate RTAs. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/121184349.html>
- MARTA. (2004). History of MARTA - 1970-1979. Retrieved from <http://web.archive.org/web/20050204222807/http://itsmarta.com/about/history02.htm>
- McIlheran, P. (2008, December 16). Magic costs more than mere rides. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/36263929.html>
- McShane, C. (1994). *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Meligrana, J. (1999). Toward Regional Transportation Governance: A Case Study of Greater Vancouver. *Transportation*, 26: 359-380.
- Metra. (2012). Metra Passenger Operations. Retrieved from http://metrarail.com/content/dam/metra/documents/ridership_reports/Passgr%20Ops%20v4%2020131014.pdf
- . (2014). Frequently Asked Questions. Retrieved from http://metrarail.com/content/metra/en/home/utility_landing/riding_metra/faq.html#q1

- Middleton, W. D. (2003). *Metropolitan Railways: Rapid Transit in America*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Murray, T. (2010, August 11). Rail Fail. *Rouse Hill Times*. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=n5h&AN=201008111001613613&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Myers, R. (2007, February 2). Your Opinions. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20070202&id=ueIqAAAIBAJ&sjid=rUUEAAAAIBAJ&pg=5008,595336>
- O'Toole, R. (2007). *The Best Laid Plans: How Government Planning Harms Your Quality of Life, Your Pocketbook, and Your Future*. Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute.
- . (2009). *Gridlock: Why We're Stuck in Traffic and What to do About it*. Washington, D.C: Cato Institute.
- Pantell, S. (2009). Tipping the Playing Field: How America's Federal Funding Policy Heavily Favors Roads Over Transit. *Light Rail Now*. Retrieved from http://www.lightrailnow.org/features/f_lrt_2009-05a.htm
- Peck, J. & Tickell, A. (2002). Neoliberalizing Space. *Antipode*, 34(3), 380-404.
- Perl, A. (2002). *New Departures: Rethinking Rail Passenger Policy in the Twenty-First Century*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Peterson, L. (2009, January 11). Commuter rail falters again as supplier fails. *Tampa Tribune*. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=n5h&AN=2W6806958174&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Potter, R. (2007, February 19). It's now or never for commuter rail. *Biz Times Milwaukee*. Retrieved from <http://www.biztimes.com/article/20070219/BLOGS/302199990/>
- Racine Journal Times. (2010, April 4). Regional bus, rail transit vital for Racine's future. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/opinion/commentary-regional-bus-rail-transit-vital-for-racine-s-future/article_2020570e-4034-11df-95c1-001cc4c03286.html
- Racine Journal Times. (2011, May 8). Boneheaded move on transit. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/editorial-boneheaded-move-on-transit/article_859bcb94-79be-11e0-a78d-001cc4c002e0.html

- Railway Gazette International. (2013). Tram projects fail to take off. *Railway Gazette International*. Vol. 169, Iss. 3. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=buh&AN=86163738&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Resler, J. (2006, December 22). Want it? Gotta pay for it. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20061222&id=WToqAAAAIBAJ&sjid=HkcEAAAAIBAJ&pg=2982,783230>
- Rice, J. (2009, January 15). Presentation opposing KRM by Thomas Rubin. *Bayview Compass*. Retrieved from <http://bayviewcompass.com/presentation-opposing-krm-by-thomas-rubin/>
- Richmond, J. (2001). A Whole-System Approach to Evaluating Urban Transit Investments. *Transport Reviews*, 21 (2), 141-179.
- Rigney-Baxter, M. (2010, April 30). Fighting over the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter line. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P2-21979885.html>
- Rohde, M. (2010, December 20). Kenosha finds own route to rail station improvements. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2010/12/20/kenosha-finds-own-route-to-rail-station-improvements/>
- Ross, B. (2006). Stuck in Traffic: Free-Market Theory Meets the Highway Lobby. *Dissent*, 53 (3), 60-64.
- Rowen, J. (2013, December 29). Government, conservative media transit hostility keep SE WI employees from work. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/purple-wisconsin/237892901.html>
- Rubin, T. A., Moore, J. E. II & Lee, S. (1999). Ten Myths about US Urban Rail System. *Transport Policy*, 6, 57-73.
- Rubin, T. A. & Poole, R, Jr. (2008). Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Corridor Transit Service Options: An Investigation and Analysis. Reason Foundation, Policy Study 372.
- Ryan, S. (2005, August 3). Plan for Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Metra extension transitions from proposal to project. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2005/08/02/metra-plans-running-on-track/>
- . (2006, July 26). Commuter rail between Kenosha, Racine and Milwaukee will lead to development, study says. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2006/07/25/krm-will-lead-to-development-study-says/>

- . (2007a, July 4). Milwaukee holds commuter rail trump card. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2007/07/04/milwaukee-holds-commuter-rail-trump-card/>
- . (2007b, May 7). Ostby: KRM's critical piece of infrastructure. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2007/05/07/ostby-krm8217s-critical-piece-of-infrastructure/>
- . (2009a, June 23). Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Link tax stirs up mix of opposition in Wisconsin. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/?s=Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee+Commuter+Link+tax+stirs+up+mix+of+opposition+in+Wisconsin>
- . (2009b, January 28). Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee sales tax faces fresh opposition. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2009/01/28/krm-sales-tax-faces-fresh-opposition/>
- . (2009c, August 24). Chugging toward a solution for construction of the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter link. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/?s=Chugging+toward+a+solution+for+construction+of+the+Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee+commuter+link>
- . (2010a, March 24). KRM debate in Wisconsin switches to development. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2010/03/24/krm-debate-switches-to-development/>
- . (2010b, April 22). Milwaukee transit bill dies in Wisconsin Senate. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2010/04/22/milwaukee-transit-bill-dies-in-senate/>
- . (2010c, June 17). Dispute over Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee commuter rail threatens project engineering. *Daily Reporter*. Retrieved from <http://dailyreporter.com/2010/06/17/commuter-rail-dispute-threatens-project-engineering/>
- . (2010d, March 24). KRM [video file]. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=dXQkH0gCA4A
- Sandler, L. (2003, July 26). Commuter rail to Chicago weighed. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20030726&id=CagaAAAAI BAJ&sjid=JkUEAAAAI BAJ&pg=5970,3048949>
- . (2004, December 22). Leaders to discuss extending Metra line. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20041222&id=ZroaAAAAI BAJ&sjid=akUEAAAAI BAJ&pg=4674,1192533>

- . (2006, November 24). New route for commuter rail. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20061124&id=TDAGAAAAIBAJ&sjid=nUUEAAAAIBAJ&pg=6528,1968482>
- . (2007, November 29). City panel considers water, rail plans. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20071128&id=QuMqAAAAIBAJ&sjid=vkUEAAAAIBAJ&pg=3029,4203512>
- . (2008, December 15). New study questions commuter rail line. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/36210564.html>
- . (2010a, August 2). RTA clings to Metra hopes for KRM. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* [blog]. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/blogs/news/99767164.html>
- . (2010b, November 15). Other rail projects face new scrutiny. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.lexisnexis.com.ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/hottopics/lnacademic/?sterms=PUBLICATION%28Milwaukee+journal+sentinel%29&verb=sr&csi=299488>
- . (2010c, May 17). Transit authority will seek federal approval for KRM commuter rail line. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/93937474.html>
- . (2010d, May 21). Scott Walker says he opposed the KRM commuter rail line. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/94620064.html>
- . (2010e, May 30). Rail ideas await their fate in Milwaukee. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/95236479.html>
- . (2010f, August 26). Hold up KRM until bus needs addressed. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/milwaukee/101518284.html>
- . (2011, July 25). It's official: Rail line from Kenosha to Milwaukee is dead. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/statepolitics/126116213.html>
- Sandler, L. & Marrero, D. (2010, June 18). Rental car bill threatens KRM rail funding. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/96701489.html>
- Schwartz, T. M. & Hawkins, H. (2013). High Speed Rail in the USA: On Track or Not? *International Journal of Technology, Policy and Management*, 13(2), 153-169.

- Smart Growth America. (2014). Take Advantage of Flexible Federal Transportation Funding. Retrieved from <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/guides/smart-growth-at-the-state-and-local-level/transportation/take-advantage-of-flexible-federal-transportation-funding/>
- Southeastern Regional Transit Authority. (2010). KRM New Starts Application, p. 1-9. Retrieved from <http://sewrpc.org/krmonline>.
- Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. (1998). Feasibility Study of Commuter Railway Passenger Train Service in the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Corridor. Community Assistance Planning Report No. 239.
- . (2003). Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Corridor Transit Study Summary Report and Recommended Plan. Community Assistance Planning Report No. 276.
- . (2007a). KRM Newsletter No. 3 - January 2007. Retrieved from http://maps.sewrpc.org/KRMonline/pdf/krm_nl-03.pdf
- . (2007b). Reports. Current Project Phase -- Station Area Plans, TOD - Sections A-I. Retrieved from <http://maps.sewrpc.org/KRMonline/reports.shtm>
- . (2011a). Background. Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Link. Retrieved from <http://maps.sewrpc.org/KRMonline/background.shtm>
- . (2011b). Purpose and Need. Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Commuter Link. Retrieved from <http://maps.sewrpc.org/KRMonline/studypurpose.shtm>
- Spieler, C. (2010). Are We Setting Up Commuter Rail to Fail? *Cite: The Architecture and Design Review of Houston*. Spring (81), 30-33.
- Steinkraus, D. (2011, February 5). Building a better Racine. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/business/local/building-a-better-racine/article_089c832a-3177-11e0-8c62-001cc4c03286.html
- Swartz, J. W. (2005, March 13). My View: New Mexico Commuter Rail is doomed to fail. *Santa Fe New Mexican*. Retrieved from <https://ezproxy.lib.uwm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=n5h&AN=479222612&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Theodore, N., Peck, J., & Brenner, N. (2011). Neoliberal Urbanism: Cities and the Rule of Markets. In G. Bridge and S. Watson (eds.) *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*, 15-25.
- Thoreson, B. (2010, May 17). Transit board to seek approval for KRM. *Racine Journal Times*. Retrieved from http://journaltimes.com/news/local/transit-board-to-seek-approval-for-krm/article_cb64a27e-6207-11df-b8d4-001cc4c03286.html

- Transit NOW. (2012). Home Page. Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) Commuter Rail. Retrieved from <http://www.transitnow.org/KRM.html>
- . (n.d.). Project Status. Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) Commuter Rail. Retrieved from <http://www.transitnow.org/project-status.html>
- Transportation Research Board. (2001). *Making Transit Work: Insight from Western Europe, Canada, and the United States*, Special Report No. 257. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- . (2003). Transit Oriented Development. *Traveler Response to Transportation System Changes*. Transit Cooperative Research Program. Ch. 17.
- U.S. Department of Transportation. (2005). A Summary of Highway Provisions in SAFETEA-LU. Federal Highway Administration. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/summary.htm>
- Vos, R. (2010, April 10). Last-ditch RTA proposal unworkable, will cost taxpayers. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://www.jsonline.com/news/opinion/90400244.html>
- Walker, S. (2007, March 22). Rail plan won't help county bus system. *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Retrieved from <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1683&dat=20070322&id=3uIqAAAAI BAJ&sjid=qkUEAAAIBAJ&pg=5449,880119>
- Weir, M., Wolman, H., & Swanstrom, T. (2005). The Calculus of Coalitions: Cities, Suburbs, and the Metropolitan Agenda. *Urban Affairs Review*, 40 (6), 730-760.

Appendix

Interview Questions:

1. In your opinion, why did the KRM Commuter Rail project ultimately fail?
2. [Depending on answer to Q1] It seems, at least on the surface, that the reason for KRM failing was largely politics. Do you feel this is accurate? Why/why not?
3. [Depending on answer to Q1] In your opinion, why has Milwaukee struggled with funding for transit not only in the KRM project, but in other projects such as Light Rail?
 - a. Was funding really the issue, or was this just the easiest way for opponents to reject the project.
4. [Depending on answer to Q1] Do you feel that the expectations for KRM may have been too high, and that this is part of the reason for its failure?
 - a. Were the economic development claims overstated?
 - b. Was there also a feeling amongst transit advocates that this project was the last hope for a large-scale passenger rail project in the Milwaukee area?
5. [Depending on answer to Q1] What was the impact of the previous light-rail debate on the KRM?
 - a. Do you feel the light-rail debate influenced the decision to shift focus to Kenosha, Racine and Chicago for potential transit projects?
 - b. Did the light rail debate set up KRM to fail?
6. [Depending on answer to Q1] Do you feel there is a connection between the failure of transit projects in Milwaukee (and Wisconsin) and the auto-dominated culture that we live in?

If so, to what extent?