

CHAPTER 2: INTRODUCTION

STUDY PURPOSE

The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission (BLRPC) completed a Transit Development Program (TDP) for Shoreline Metro for the period between 2021 and 2025. The area considered in this study consists of the Cities of Sheboygan and Sheboygan Falls and the Village of Kohler, located within the Sheboygan Urbanized Area in Wisconsin.

Public transit services have been provided for decades in Sheboygan. Similar to several other communities, the City of Sheboygan had to assume operation of the public transportation system when that system was no longer profitable for a private operator in the early 1970s. The City of Sheboygan has continued to operate Shoreline Metro as a service to the community and area.

With the increased scrutiny of transit funding at all levels of government and increased public demands for improved transit services, it is appropriate to develop a short-range plan for public transportation services in the community and area. This planning process permits careful consideration of factors expected to impact transit services (including the need for such services) over the next five years, as well as the development of a strategy to optimize the use of capital and operational funding to meet the needs of the service area. This plan involves careful consideration of the appropriate future direction for public transportation services in the Sheboygan area, as well as the appropriate manner in which such services should be provided.

ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

Specific issues addressed in the TDP planning process included the following:

- What do passengers think of Shoreline Metro? (See Chapter 5).
- At what locations do passengers board the bus the most in the transit service area? (Chapter 6).
- What are the most productive and least productive routes and route segments of Shoreline Metro? (Chapters 6 and 7).
- How does Shoreline Metro compare to peer transit operations around the Midwest in terms of various performance measures? (Chapter 7).
- What goals, objectives and standards are appropriate for the future of Shoreline Metro? (Chapter 8).
- Are fixed-route transit operations the most appropriate strategy for the Sheboygan area, or should other operational strategies be pursued? (Chapter 9).
- What types of transit service (fixed-route, demand response, route deviation, or a combination of these) are appropriate for the many individual transit markets in the Sheboygan area? (Chapter 9).
- If fixed-route service is appropriate for the transit service area, then does fixed-route service need radical reform, or are minor modifications to routes adequate? (Chapter 9).
- What additions and deletions to transit service are appropriate? (Chapter 10).

- What is the short-term outlook for operating revenues from federal and state sources? (Chapter 10).
- Should communities in the service area be willing to assume an increased local funding responsibility for transit services? (Chapter 10).
- What appropriate fare policy should be implemented by Shoreline Metro? (Chapter 10).
- What capital projects should be pursued to achieve transit goals? (Chapter 10).
- How should Shoreline Metro market itself over the next five years? (Chapter 10).
- How can changing demographics and land use patterns best be accommodated by Shoreline Metro? (Chapter 10).
- What methods should Shoreline Metro utilize to internally monitor its performance? (Chapter 10).
- What land use policies should be established to facilitate public transportation service? (Chapter 10).
- How can transit be used to achieve mobility and land use goals? (Chapter 10).
- What is the appropriate implementation sequence for recommendations made in this plan? (Chapter 10).

PLANNING PROCESS

The development of this Sheboygan TDP involved a substantial amount of research in the service area and the analysis of four alternative service configurations for the provision of transit service in the Sheboygan area. The Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission and Shoreline Metro collected and analyzed data concerning current characteristics of the transit system and of the service area. Two separate data collection efforts were conducted to obtain: (1) the opinions of transit riders; and (2) a sense of route ridership patterns. Other items developed in the planning process included: a peer system analysis; a cost allocation model; analysis of productivity by route; and goals, objectives and standards for the TDP. All of this information was used to develop alternative service configurations which were analyzed in the process of developing a recommended plan for public transportation in the Sheboygan area. The “implementation strategy” section of the recommended plan establishes the direction for achieving key recommendations in this TDP.

The TDP Review Committee met on 13 occasions to review TDP elements from August 2018 to September 2020. This TDP is a joint effort of the Sheboygan Transit Commission, local citizens, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission, the affected local governmental bodies, and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.