

To Linda for file

# SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

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July 16, 2007

Serving the Counties of:



Mr. Michael S. D'Amato, Alderman  
City Hall, Room 205  
200 East Wells Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Alderman D'Amato:

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the request being made of the City of Milwaukee to endorse the land use plans prepared for the Milwaukee Downtown and South Side stations serving the proposed Kenosha-Milwaukee-Racine commuter rail line.

These plans were prepared in cooperation with the City of Milwaukee staff and elected officials, working with neighborhood residents and businesses. The purpose of the plans is to identify the potential for higher density land development and redevelopment in the station areas, which could be endorsed by neighborhood residents and businesses and City officials, and which would add tax base and transit ridership.

The request being made of the City of Milwaukee to endorse these land use plans is intended to demonstrate that the City supports the proposed higher density, transit-oriented development and redevelopment, and will work to implement those plans by incorporating them into City land use plans and zoning ordinances, should the KRM commuter rail project proceed to implementation.

The U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in considering whether a proposed rail project receives a discretionary capital grant, does examine the potential for higher density, transit-oriented development and redevelopment, including community endorsements of station area land use plans, because such development and redevelopment may be expected to add to transit ridership and make the Federal transit investment more attractive.

The FTA does not require community endorsement of station area land use plans as a condition of receiving a discretionary capital grant; moreover, lack of such endorsement is not necessarily "fatal", as was suggested at your July 3 Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee hearing. Nonetheless, such endorsements are highly desirable because the FTA does rate each proposed candidate project prior to making a recommendation for funding, and the potential for transit-oriented development and redevelopment and community endorsements are considered in those ratings and recommendations.

We hope this clarifies the endorsement being sought of the City of Milwaukee. Should you have any questions concerning the station area land use plans or the proposed KRM commuter rail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Philip C. Evenson  
Executive Director