



6.0 INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

At the time of this report's preparation, the following represents a likely operating scenario for a KACOT commuter rail service.

- Use of diesel multiple unit (DMU) rail vehicles on new separate tracks constructed within the CN Railway right-of-way.
- Service would connect to the Metra Electric District (MED) service at its southernmost terminal, which is presently University Park. Passengers would transfer from KACOT rail vehicles to MED trains. Should Metra extend service southward, the new terminal station would be the point at which transfers between the two services would be made.
- KACOT service could extend as far south as the I-57 Exit 308, near the southern limit of the City of Kankakee.

This service scenario is based partly on Metra's expressed reluctance of to consider operating service outside of its legislative jurisdiction at this time, i.e., the six county Northeastern Illinois region. Another factor, however, is the larger investment requirements of an extension of electrified MED service, compared to a DMU connecting service. The enabling legislation of the RTA Act of 1983 allows the provision of service outside of the six-county metropolitan region. Section 2.07 of the Act, Extra Territorial Authority,¹ allows RTA to enter into agreements with any unit of government for such service.

With this background in mind, the following summarizes various activities related to institutional issues conducted during the course of the KACOT-II study. These issues deal with government agencies and other groups who are not directly represented on the KACOT Task Force. They were addressed primarily through meetings with these other entities.

Metra Contacts: The history of Metra's role on the line is summarized in Section 1.3 of this report. The project's relationship with Metra is also discussed generally in Section 1.5. Formal contact with Metra was made at the onset of the study in a meeting with Metra's Executive Director, Philip Pagano, in April 2006.² Mr. Pagano had read the Phase I KACOR study, and as such, was familiar with the service

¹ (70 ILCS 3615/) Regional Transportation Authority Act, Article II, Section 2.07.

² Summary of Meeting with Phil Pagano of Metra, prepared by Kevin Grigg, Earth Tech, April 19, 2006.



proposed. He advised Kankakee County to move as quickly as possible to the AA/DEIS phase. He noted that Metra was planning for an extension of the Metra Electric Line to serve a new yard to be sited in the Peotone area. That new yard is required to service the new cars being introduced on the Electric Line that are equipped with bathrooms.

River Valley Metro Transit: Meetings were held with the local transit operator, including a meeting of the Metro Strategic Planning Committee.³ Metro indicated it was willing to consider being the operator of a future rail or bus rapid transit service. Metro's by-laws would need to be modified to permit the imposition of a local tax.

CN Railway: The history of railroad ownership of the current CN line and the KACOT program relationship to date with the railroad are summarized in Chapter 1. More specific information on the railroad's inputs to and feedback on the proposed Independent Rail Alternative is provided in Chapter 5.

Northeast Illinois Regional Transportation Authority (RTA): Meetings were held with staff of the RTA, including its executive director. RTA expressed a willingness to consider services outside of its legislative jurisdiction, with the understanding that entities other than RTA or its Service Boards would be responsible for funding. RTA staff also provided information in the Regional Technical Assistance Program (RTAP), a program sponsored by the RTA that seeks to provide technical and/or financial assistance to various levels of local government in the six-county region to support transit planning studies. Transit Oriented Development (TOD) studies for Monee and Peotone prospective station areas are two possible RTAP projects.

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP): Telephone calls, letters and meetings were held with CMAP as part of negotiating an agreement from the agency to develop ridership estimates using their travel demand forecasting system. Those discussions, and modeled results, are covered in the Ridership and Revenue Estimates of Chapter 3.

Ring Around the Collar Counties: The Northeastern Illinois Regional Transportation Authority covers Cook County and the five surrounding counties of DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will. These five counties are commonly referred to as the RTA "collar counties." Since the establishment of the RTA in

³ Notes to File on Meeting: River Valley Metro Strategic Planning Session, September 26, 2006.



the early 1970s the service provided by the RTA and its Service Boards has been limited to this six-county area, with only minor pre-existing exceptions.

In the past five years, several of the counties outside and adjacent to the RTA's six-county area, the "ring-around-the collar" (RAC) counties, have initiated studies of new commuter rail service extending or connecting with Metra. In October of 2006, a meeting of representatives from many of these areas was convened, including Rockford, Kendall/Kane, and Kankakee. Representatives from the Illinois Department of Transportation participated. The meeting was chaired by a representative of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MWHsRA). The focus of the meeting was a discussion of mutual benefits that could result from the RAC project sponsors and other represented groups working collaboratively. Items discussed included the following:

- Common Funding Pursuits
 - Broader political base
 - Common Lobbying
 - Enabling taxing legislation (at variable levels)
 - Funding support (state and feds)
- Higher quality relations:
 - Metra, Freight Railroads, CMAP, Amtrak
- Capital Programs
 - Rolling Stock Procurements
 - Public Education/Outreach (FTA New Starts Criterion)
- Maintenance
 - Distribute specializations of component overhaul (engines, trucks, power units, HVAC units)
 - Procurement and sharing of spares
- Transportation
 - Share layover yard staffs in emergency
 - Share rolling stock for emergencies and special events
- Mechanical
 - Share maintenance staff in emergency
- Administration



- o Economies of scale with common operating contractor
- o Management, HR, Accounting, Training
- o Common Brand (similar to Pace)

The meeting participants discussed cross referencing projects on web sites and newsletters as well as to create a comprehensive contacts list. The state-funded interstate passenger rail program was also discussed.

Midwest High Speed Rail Association: The Midwest High Speed Rail Association⁴ is a membership-based non-profit organization advocating the development of fast, frequent and dependable passenger trains linking the entire Midwest. As noted earlier, Rick Harnish, Executive Director of the Association, chaired the Ring Around the Collar meeting described above. The Association has been a strong advocate for expanded Illinois-supported Amtrak service. On October 30, 2006, an additional round trip was added to the 310-mile Chicago-Carbondale route, which includes a stop in Kankakee.

⁴ <http://www.midwesthsr.org/index.htm>