

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



Location: Kansas City Kansas Community College

Recorder: Marge Gasnick

A REGION OF VIBRANT PLACES

1. Maintain and develop healthy downtowns and urban areas (10)
2. Focus on revitalization and infill projects in older communities (22)
3. Develop dynamic corridors of economic, business and housing activity (9)
4. Create major employment centers at strategic locations (4)

Discussion

- Comment on video clip: no black people were represented.
- One participant said downtown Kansas City, Kan. (KCK), because that's where he lives. Another mentioned that downtown is often hub of a major urban area.
- Create employment centers – two people. Kansas City has always been a segmented city, so that's why we don't have mass transit. Having people's jobs close to where they live will be readily accepted here. Enables poor people to have access to jobs.
- Economic development, housing and schools are important.
- Assist businesses downtown to help them survive. They need help because otherwise they have to leave. Parking and taxes are issues downtown.
- Developing corridors helps people move around. Investment in transit is important because businesses will want to locate where transit is. Having a place to live, work and shop shouldn't require a car. Kansas City used to have a trolley system.
- Major transit routes are needed to help offset high gas prices, especially for those with long commutes.
- [Infill development is great but] sometimes areas outside downtown are ignored. Also eliminates people having to move and go far distances to get to places they need to go. Corresponds with having a green region. And these communities need to be accessible to older people because the population is aging; [need to] make areas walkable.
- Independence Center/Vision Metcalf video. What about KCK?
- Downtown KCK and old Indian Springs were cited as places in KCK where this vision should manifest.
- Now, there's only one development in KCK – out west.
- KCK has great homes; need more new housing in older areas such as Strawberry Hill. Another participant agreed that KCK has great neighborhoods.
- Vibrant communities – haven't talked about individuals yet. We subsidize greenfield development, but don't give benefits for most infill areas, particularly east of Troost in Kansas City, Mo. (KCMO). Corporations have gotten subsidies.

A CONNECTED REGION

1. Develop robust transit system. (46)
2. Develop regional trails. (1)
3. Maintain existing roads. (3)

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



4. Maximize the use of the region's existing highway capacity. (1)

Discussion

- Question about robust transit system: Are we talking about here in KCK or going outside the area?
- Resident who grew up in Quindaro area recalled taking bus and trolley to get wherever she wanted to go. Black people got cut off from everywhere else. Issue of race was raised again and angered this participant.
- Question: How far in the future are we talking?
- Question: Is one strategy at expense of another one?
- Question: What's the difference between three and four?
- One participant raised the issue of disabilities.
- Robust transit system was favored by one, but concern was expressed about drawing a line in the sand if we say we're going in this direction. We still need a strong highway system and maintain our roads.
- Most of our communities are cut off from each other. Buses stop at 9 or 10 at night, which hinders employment opportunities. Lack of connectivity to KCMO and Johnson County. Need to develop infrastructure to connect people here in KCK.
- Robust transit system: We have an obligation as a society that no matter where people live they need to be able to get places at the least cost. Have to get over attitude of not wanting certain folks to come into our neighborhoods. Part of vibrant society is diversity. Robust transit is key part of this.
- Robust transit: One participant recalled living downtown and walking to work. Frequency and ease of use are important. Going to New York City; easy to use transit there. Now, system in our region is too complicated and infrequent.
- One person talked about growing up at 13th and New Jersey and her experience with transit service. This is what people are wanting: a way to be connected.
- Another participant noted that it is Earth Day and that we are heading towards having limited cars whether we want it or not.
- Question: Can we vote for more than one option?
- Extremely important that each community has consideration in a regional transit system. Every community needs access to it.
- Trails: Amsterdam has 700 miles of trails.

A GREEN REGION

1. Promote energy conservation. (27)
2. Develop programs to promote drinking water quality, reduce runoff. (4)
3. Generate less trash and recycle or reuse waste. (8)
4. Improve air quality. (1)
5. Protect and restore natural amenities. (4)

Discussion

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



- Natural amenities are most important because it will take 20–30 years to develop all these things, but we really need to protect our earth.
- Generate less trash: Excess packaging from purchased items is a problem. Restrictions on what can be recycled locally. What is the plan, and what can I recycle?
- Quindaro Underground Railroad is celebrating Earth Day this Friday and Saturday. ISTEAs need to be brought out and implemented.
- Promoting energy conservation kind of gets at other strategies; will reduce runoff and generate less trash in and of itself. Get rid of coal and oil and move towards alternative energy sources.
- One participant has four kids, and when KCK started recycling got tiny recycling bin. Animals get in them.
- How is KCK recycling program working? One participant said only three houses on his block recycle.
- In Argentine, good participation.
- President of Neighborhood Watch picked up 300 recycling bins and delivered them. Have over 80 percent compliance.
- One participant said city has stopped picking up recycling on Washington St. Rules change without notice.
- Companies that are making products that are taking up all the space need to be accountable and part of process. Another said residents started unwrapping items in the store and leaving packaging in the store.
- We need to insist that large companies [don't] get to make final decision on what direction we go in. Individuals and communities need to get involved.
- Energy conservation: install small light bulbs. One participant noted his electric bill has gone down considerably.
- Create waste management company right here in KCK; this would create jobs as well. Has been proposed before but blocked by BPU.
- Encourage our neighbors to be clean conscious. Trash all over streets needs to be picked up.

General comments

- One man is 74 years old. Central Avenue between 6th and 18th streets: Hispanic community has taken over that whole district. Robust transit and corridors going west. Ninety percent of things mentioned here are taking place in KCMO, not in KCK. What do we have to look forward to?
- Housing developments on Metropolitan – new curbs and sidewalks. Little by little there's improvement.
- Washington from 5th to 7th streets looks good.
- Pristine space at Quindaro Underground should be recognized. Northeast area is disappearing; gentrification is painful. Using federal money for code enforcement, removing transit service is killing this area.
- Wyandotte County has so much trash. We need to reduce it. Recycling and picking up trash: it comes down to will of human beings to do something about it.
- Representation of Hispanic community is disproportionately low. They need to be a part of the discussion.
- Educating individuals to take action would enable all five strategies to be knocked out.

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



- Connectivity: Need to put in contraflow or mass transit lane to reduce bus-trip lengths.
- Nice to rank strategies, but money should be spent on all of them.
- People should write their congressmen and state representatives. Think about how much people spend on driving.