

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



Location: Metropolitan Community College-Longview

Recorder: Ron Achelpohl

A REGION OF VIBRANT PLACES

1. Maintain and develop healthy downtowns and urban areas throughout the region. (3)
2. Focus on revitalization and infill (redevelopment) projects in older communities. (26)
3. Develop dynamic corridors of economic, business and housing activity along major transit routes. (14)
4. Create major employment centers at strategic locations to maximize the region's competitive advantages. (9)

Discussion

- Voters of Kansas City have voted light rail down twice. Small towns need to be better connected; light rail would be a great way to do it.
- Need higher population density to make light rail work. Need infill development to make rail work in our metro.
- What's lacking in discussion is areas with poverty; residential areas [are] falling into disrepair. Transportation is important in areas where people don't have cars.
- [I] support revitalization, but [I'm] concerned about preserving local history and historic neighborhoods and buildings, too.
- Revitalization is very important. It's a starting place; focus on areas in need of attention before building new.
- Employment is the key to any vibrant community so location of workplaces is key Number 4.
- The focus [of Number 3] should be on connecting dots with some sort of transit.
- Kansas City is one of most spread-out areas in the U.S., unlike Chicago which is built around transit. All issues are about how to get around city.
- Key is to enable financially. Right now, greenfield development is easier than revitalization. Need incentives for development in older areas or force developers to build in developed areas.
- Focus on revitalization in older communities, but also [in] older communities. Peak oil and energy concerns in future make closer destinations important.
- Supports goal Number 2, go back to development patterns from a generation or two ago. Include neighborhood markets and other basic services within walking distance of residences.
- Revitalization needs to incorporate essential services like post offices, dry cleaners, not just boutique retail. Focus on where development has already happened to take advantage of investment in existing infrastructure.
- Make revitalization a magnet for more redevelopment.
- Change incentives for developers to buy farmland for new development — less of that and more infill and redevelopment incentives.
- I voted for Number 1 because there are multiple downtown centers around the region.

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



- Regarding Bullet 3, I didn't vote for it but have thought for a long time how wasteful it is for buildings to sit empty during the day when people go to work in different places. Support more mixed-use development where people live and work in same neighborhoods or buildings.

A CONNECTED REGION

1. Develop a robust transit system. (42)
2. Develop a system of regional trails. (5)
3. Maintain our existing roads to a high standard. (1)
4. Maximize the use of the region's existing highway capacity. (8)

Discussion

- [Number 1] should be at the top of our priority list. It's important to create jobs, but people have to be able to get to them, too.
- I live in Lee's Summit and work in Edwardsville; I spend 1.5 hours each way commuting every day. I'd rather spend that time with family.
- Light rail should be the priority before buses. Buses today are not as useful as they were in the past, services are not as comprehensive and frequent as they were even in 1960s.
- A light rail spine with expanded bus service is realistic for Kansas City.
- Prefer a wagon-wheel approach with downtown as hub with buses connecting regional hubs.
- Buses can use existing infrastructure moving towards a light rail system. Use existing infrastructure and buses first, but plan and build rail.
- Funding for rail will take 15–30 years, so BRT is an important interim step.
- I lived in San Diego, which has both rail and buses. Transit actually takes more time than driving, even with their congestion.
- Need to define differences between commuter rail, light rail and streetcars. Phoenix just opened a 20-mile system that takes an hour to get from one end to another with stops every mile. We are more spread out, so we need higher speed rail with fewer stops than that.
- We need to look at how the city will look in 20–30 years. Take future congestion into account, not just current conditions.
- Kansas City will be left behind if we don't develop rapid transit and other cities do. [I] live in Lee's Summit, but commute to Worlds of Fun. Transit is both an environmental and economic competitiveness issue.
- If we have more cars, congestion and longer commutes, light rail will make lots of sense.
- We also need regional trails that can provide green spaces. Important to connect children to nature.
- Seventy percent of Lee's Summit's population out-migrates every day. Shouldn't we provide more employment here?

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



- Develop and focus on economic corridors. Each corridor can have different transit mode to support unique needs.

A GREEN REGION

1. Promote energy conservation and use of renewable resources. (15)
2. Develop programs to maintain drinking water quality, reduce runoff and improve stream quality. (3)
3. Generate less trash and recycle or reuse the waste we do generate. (28)
4. Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (3)
5. Protect and restore the region's natural amenities. (4)

Discussion

- We'll be forced to change lifestyle whether we want to or not. If gas prices go up, economy will grind to a halt.
- Most people won't recycle unless it's easy. Provide bins and curbside recycling.
- We've got recycling in Raytown, but bins are too small.
- [I] like the idea of planting trees and gardens. We'll need more local food in the future.
- Has anyone considered methane capture from landfills for energy? LaFarge does it north of river.
- Johnson County landfill captures all methane. Required by law. Heats 3,000 homes a day.
- Agree that we need to get more into local production of food. A community should be a self-reliant as possible in generating food and reusing waste.
- Need to invest more into waste to energy transfer stations. Plasma arc technology: Break trash into elements that can be resold and clean energy. Used in Japan and Europe, but no implementation in U.S.
- Facilitator: Creative suggestions for reducing garbage?
- Plasma arc technology. See above.
- Get rid of junk mail! Or make it too costly to send.
- Just start thinking about recycling, that the first step. I started years ago in eastern Jackson County. Through you junk mail into recycling.
- Recycle everything. Include paints, batteries, oil, computer components and other stuff that takes more effort to recycle.
- Another way to reduce trash is to compost.
- Buy products with less packaging. DON'T buy products with excess packaging.
- Buy products that don't need to be thrown away or recycled. Reuse your water bottle, coffee mug, shopping bag, etc.
- Don't charge to recycle the hard stuff.

NOTES FROM APRIL 22 PUBLIC FORUMS



- Starbucks gives a discount if you bring your own mug. Shatto milk comes in reusable bottles with refundable deposit. Both give an incentive to consumers for responsible behavior.
- Make recycling easier and give good information.
- San Francisco has banned plastic bags. Use reusable cloth bags instead. Ban plastic bags here.
- At church we have a green team. Handing out info on ten environmental things the congregation can do.
- This group has a high level of environmental consciousness. If we spent more time restoring and protecting natural resources, more people would be educated environmental consumers. Change mindset by reconnecting people with nature.
- Being able to get to food from local farmers encompasses all of these issues.
- Nobody wants to say this, but we need to stop urban sprawl. Other countries don't develop this way. We can't keep doing this.
- Lee's Summit is a great place to live, but have to commute for employment. Not sure I can retire here.
- Who wants to live in urban core where population is dense and there is more crime?
- You have to look at schools. You can't send kids to public school in Kansas City, Mo. or Kan., and expect them to get a decent education.
- I've moved many times to take advantage of good schools for my kids.
- With computers, you can work out of home and not commute.
- I live in Lee's Summit because I could build the house I want for a price I could afford.
- In defense of urban core, I want to live there despite school district. Great neighborhoods and housing choices.
- This discussion shows how these issues are all interconnected. We can't just focus on one thing at a time.