



**WORKSHOP SERIES**

Blue Springs South High School  
Blue Springs, Mo.  
Nov. 13, 2008

**We were told that the physical size of the Kansas City region should not be increased — that we should stop building new neighborhoods farther away from the city’s urban center. Instead, we should look to rehabilitate, repurpose and reinvest in older neighborhoods and structures.**

**How do you feel about this?**

- I think it’s a good idea but people don’t want to do that. They don’t want to live in Kansas City. They want their new home, new land and new property where they want to invest.
- I feel that one of the reasons our economy is so going through so many problems right now is because the housing market is just awful. I think that is because everybody wants to move into a new home. If we do renovate and repair old structures that were built a long time ago, it will create more space and will get our housing back on track.
- I feel like if we are trying to accommodate 500,000 new people, the old housing is not going to be enough.

**If we told you that many of the houses in the older neighborhoods are in disrepair and sitting empty, does this change your thoughts?**

- They are sitting there for a reason. People don’t want to live there. They want to go where there are better schools.
- If you build new houses in that area, the people who want to live there maybe can’t afford to live there and those who can afford to live there don’t want to live there.

**Does anyone here have anyone they know that lives in the inner city of Kansas City? Have you ever been there? Can you imagine a reason why someone might want to invest in the inner city and live there?**

- It might be cheaper to buy houses there, but [my brother] has spent a lot of money fixing up [his house] there because houses are older and not insulated. It will cost him about as much to fix up the house [as it would have for him to have bought] a new house. So it’s not cost-effective. He moved in because it’s closer to his job, but it’s about the same if he drove down there.
- My cousin moved down there and it’s pretty nice. She went down there because it is closer to her job and it saves her a lot of money on transport. It might be pretty good for people without families.
- It’s better for younger people who want access to entertainment.
- I feel like it’s a good investment to build new houses down there, but what about the families that live there? If we want to redo an entire neighborhood, people will lose their homes.

**Participants said that we should create mixed-use areas that combine housing, commercial/retail and employment centers.**

**Would you live in a mixed-use neighborhood? Why or why not?**



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- Overland Park and huge places like that have nice neighborhoods, shopping centers and jobs. Overland Park is a huge place and takes up a lot of space. It's about the same as we have Independence Center so many miles away and either way you're using the same amount of space.
- I think the biggest problem is that we still have to build these neighborhoods. We need to try to fix the neighborhoods that we already have. We should spend more time trying to fix what we already have.
- Overland Park is a great place but it is so vast that it might be two miles from home to a grocery store. If we fixed up existing houses and then used the extra space to build entertainment, facilities, grocery stores and things like that, then the houses would be more desirable for people to move into. I think that would be good for neighborhoods closer in where transportation costs can be reduced, but here for us to get to school it's too far to walk or ride a bike.

**Are you all pretty much dependent on cars? What would happen if you didn't have access to cars?**

- Stay at home
- There is no way for us to get around without cars. There are students who live in Lee's Summit and they have to take a highway to get here. The buses come at 6-6:15 in the morning and no one wants to get up that early.
- We'd ride the bus to school and ride the bus home and we wouldn't go anywhere else.

**Why is that? Is it because everything is so spread out?**

- There is no public bus to take us to the stores, we have to drive.
- It's a convenience factor. If we wanted to, we could get rid of a lot of cars. We could have one car per family. The fact is a lot of people like their independence.

**Instructor: How many of you drove your own car to school today? Raise your hand.**

Most participants raised their hands.

- If we all decided that tomorrow if we all decided to ride the bus, there would be no way we could all fit. So if we used the buses, you would have to multiply the number of buses by five.

**We were also told that neighborhoods should include efficient public transit (this may include buses, light rail, etc.), sidewalks, and access to other ways of getting around.**

**How important is access to transportation to you?**

- We were talking yesterday about Chicago; there's always public transportation available and there is no need for a car. If I was in a city I would use public transport. Here in Blue Springs I think it would work but there are people here who are too lazy and want to use their own car.



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- I think light rail would really help us a lot.

**Where would light rail take you?**

- If it went down I-70 that would help a lot, because it's a main highway and get to a lot of different places from it.
- If there was some form of transportation that went downtown Kansas City I would take it every day. I drive to ballet practice down town every day.

**If public transit services were available to you would you use them?**

- The metro bus comes to Blue Springs every morning, but they only have two or three times. You have to be there at 6 or 6:30 so there it's not convenient to get up two hours early just to get to work on time or leave work early to be able to get home.

**What role does government play in providing transportation services to the public?**

- The government should be listening to the people because they represent the [needs].
- We have a lot of roads now. It is really inconvenient to travel on roads that are not maintained. The government should concentrate on maintaining existing roads and not make new ones.
- If we put in public transportation, there would be less wear on roads and they wouldn't have to fix them so often. Government should take a leadership role in providing public transportation.
- I-70 will need to be expanded from two lanes because the new shopping center at Adams Dairy. If the government puts in public transit, there will be enough use of the roads.
- The government needs to decide to provide public transportation.
- States that have toll roads have better roads. Governments should look at funding transportation through tolls.

**Participants at the kickoff event told us that local governments should take a leadership role in creating a "green" culture. This means that policies and regulations should be established to help us become more environmentally friendly.**

**Is being friendly to the environment important to you? Why or why not?**

- The government could regulate recycling.
- Having solar and wind power will help to reduce burning coal and fossil fuels.
- Having a green culture is important to everyone. We need to protect our state parks; refuge for wildlife.
- In Virginia they have curbside recycling where people separate the recyclables and it is picked up like trash. Government could make curbside recycling work.



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**Many communities in the Kansas City Region have curbside recycling. Would you like to have that in Blue Springs?**

- We are taught that we need to recycle but it's too inconvenient. There is no [place to take recyclables] in Blue Springs.
- The green club at the school tried to get a recycling program at the school but it was turned down because it's too expensive. But that may be changing. Something may be in the works.
- You can't rely on recycling to have a green culture. You need other things. The government needs to step up to provide guidance. We need different forms of energy. The citizens are ready; the government needs to step up.

**There is a belief that it is better for the environment and for us as consumers to get our food from local producers. To accomplish this, it was proposed that government and local community organizations should encourage local food production, community gardens and urban farming.**

**How do you feel about this?**

- People are struggling in today's economy. If we grow it closer, that creates jobs.
- We need to start buying from local producers, but we are used to buying strawberries all year round.
- My family is a part of a program at Hen House where they buy local products once a week.

**It's been said that it's very impractical to get our food locally year round. Are you aware of the economics of where and how we get our food?**

- If we focused on getting more of our food from local growers we can significantly increase getting our food locally. It is very impractical to think we can get all of our food locally.
- Many countries are having economic problems. Small businesses are slowly dying, but if we buy locally it will help. Some foods we can't get locally, that will help other countries.
- Local producers many times have better quality products. We should support local growers in-season.
- It can be healthier to buy locally because fewer chemicals are used to preserve.

**Where does locally produced food fall in importance within the broader "green culture" discussion? What of the things we've talked about is most important?**

- Recycling.
- Foods need to be packaged. It's important to recycle the packaging.

**A lot of what we throw away is packaging for the products we buy and use.**

**Would you be willing to pay a deposit that could be redeemed when an empty container is returned to the store or to some other location? Why or why not?**



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- People are too lazy to do it.
- There is a local milk product that uses glass bottles and you pay a deposit on and you return it to the store. If there were more products out there like that, people would do it.
- It would be better if you could return your packaging at multiple locations rather than having to take it back to the store where you bought it.
- When you add costs to packaging that adds up fast. People don't have extra money to pay deposits. Even if you're going to get it back many people don't have that extra money.