

## **PUBLIC TRANSIT ENGAGEMENT**

**Nov. 8, 2007**

**Location: Public Safety Building, Blue Springs**

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Facilitator: Tristan Cook

Recorder: Gerri Doyle

Staff: Colleen Becker

Attendees: 17

### **Do you use transit in Kansas City?**

- Thirteen people in the room use transit at least some times — most used the commuter bus regularly.
- Four do not, but most of those had used transit in other cities.

### **Why do you use transit?**

- Cheaper.
- Safer.
- Nap on the bus.
- Less stress.
- Convenient.
- Can read and work while riding.
- Inclement weather.
- Eliminate parking and the cost for parking.
- Ridership up when weather bad price is good.
- Accessibility for those who can't drive.

### **Why do you not use transit?**

- The schedule is not convenient.
- Timetable does not meet schedule.
- Need one more Blue Springs bus in the morning and the evening standing room only on most buses.
- Crowded buses.
- No local buses.
- Not run where and when I want to travel.
- Does not go to the airport.
- Would ride downtown for entertainment.
- Takes too long.
- Needs to be quicker.
- No way to get home if there is an emergency.
- Stuck downtown during the middle of the day.
- Service not consistent.
- Difficult to make connections.
- Drivers not helpful.
- Need to be more convenient and efficient to make people use the system.

### **Why would others in Kansas City not use transit?**

- Not able to get to night shifts downtown.
- Passengers from the suburbs ought to be able to ride the buses back to the garage.
- Driver response is really inconsistent.
- KCATA is really unresponsive to customer needs.
- Lots of different excuses for why buses don't arrive or arrive on time.

Public transit engagements hosted by One KC Voice, a program of the Mid-America Regional Council,  
with a grant from the Federal Transit Administration.

600 Broadway, Ste. 200 | Kansas City, MO | 64105 | 816/474-4240 | [www.onekcvoice.org](http://www.onekcvoice.org)

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- Inconsistent reliability of buses (three to five times per year the buses break down on the Blue Springs route).
- Nonexistent customer service.
- Current passenger with a bus passes don't get any credit for times when the bus doesn't arrive or on Ozone Alert days and drivers don't always have coupons.
- Not all lots are plowed.
- Job requires lot of travel during the day, not want to spend all day in transit to get to a destination.
- Live near work.
- If there were services to entertainment destinations then could expand ridership with folks who don't want to park at the Sprint Center. Group agreed need a Sprint bus.
- No way for kids and old folks to get around town without having a parent drive you around — KCATA seems to have no interest in service of this type.
- Why not use circulator buses to run to Blue Springs in the middle of the day?
- Transit should be a government service and government — not supposed to make money.

### **Where do you go? Where does anyone you know go?**

- The group generally agreed that the only service to Blue Springs residents is the commuter bus to work, so that is the only destination they go on the bus.
- Residents can't go anywhere else in the metro on the bus unless they get downtown on the commuter bus and connect to another bus downtown.
- OATS is only available on certain days for the elderly or else [the elderly] have to use a taxi, which is unreliable in Blue Springs. In town may take the MAX to lunch, but otherwise no other service to Blue Springs.

### **What are your top three destinations?**

- Gas station.
- Work.
- Library.
- Grocery store.
- Mall.
- Gym.
- YMCA.
- Lunch.
- Guitar lessons.
- Church.
- Bank.
- Downtown.
- Independence Center.
- School (drop off kids).
- College.
- Doctor.
- Children's activities.
- See clients.
- Airport.
- Entertainment.
- Infrequent destinations included casinos, other malls across the region, Sprint Center, race track, Plaza.

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### Where would you look for information on alternatives to your car?

- The city is not designed for walking and the disabled.
- Group agreed that they would look on the Internet.
- Work has a rideshare service for carpoolers.
- Rideshare.
- KCATA.
- City Hall.
- Chamber.

### What would your dream transit system look like?

- Bus lane from Blue Springs to downtown dedicated on the highway.
- Train from Blue Springs to downtown.
- Maglev train — new technology that is fast and convenient.
- Have to have a mix of services, light rail, fast commuter lines, circulators for neighborhoods, specialized services for the disabled, Kansas City spending too much trying to their own thing — need to piggy back off other systems. In Colorado, you can take the mass transit system to colleges, downtown, runs a lot of hours, and has a lot of service to the suburbs. Like New York Grand Central terminal, where [there are] a mix of services, make Union Station a hub.
- Use freight line ROW for passenger rails.
- Television monitors — news, weather, etc.
- Wi-Fi for commuters.
- Backbone E-W and Olathe to the Airport (N-S).
- Run along I-35 and -70.
- Same drivers every day, on-time, consistent.
- Knowledgeable.
- Wish they [KCATA] could keep a route and not change drivers every three months.
- Wish they [KCATA] could use the radio and communicate with each other and the dispatcher.
- Real-time information.
- Frequent/continuous runs.
- Multiple runs.
- We need lots of entries and exits from the region for emergency situations.
- The service would operate from 5 a.m. till 2 a.m. the next day.
- Every stop has a monitor with GPS tracker that shows where the bus is with a color to show if on time late or really late, weather, etc.
- Enclosed, heated bus stops.
- Bigger seats.
- Spaced evenly.
- Well-designed buses.

### How far are willing to walk?

- Will walk up a mile to get to a bus.
- General positive head shaking in agreement to a max of eight blocks. How long can dedicate to walking? About 10 minutes, maximum.
- In the morning, Ankeny, Iowa, has articulated buses, think we need different size buses (in KC) and thinks that using them would mean [KCATA] not need as many of the 40-foot buses, so can carry more people.
- How far I will walk depends on the weather. Not willing to walk eight blocks in the winter. Half a block walk, maximum, when cold and slick.

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- Need to have system in place that goes closer to where you start and end your trip — need more extensive coverage.
- Shuttles to take you around town for errands or to the park-and-ride lot.
- Park-and-ride that is ice free all year however that happens (lot of talking at once on ideas about how to keep lots clear of ice and snow).
- Security on the bus and at stops.

### **What mode of transit service?**

- LRT.
- Trolley.
- Bus-only lanes.
- HOV lane.
- Small buses.
- Paratransit.
- Feeder buses.
- Two-person cars that drive you a short distance, like that town back east.

### **How long would you wait for a transit vehicle?**

- Twenty minutes average.
- Group conversation about the length, several thought that a 10-minute wait is the maximum for many folks.
- Kansas City needs more than the Metro bus to serve tourists and visitors.
- Do like LRT — make the system a backbone and run the buses from that.
- Long conversation about LRT design ensued among 2–3 participants.
- LRT needs to not block traffic and not interfere with existing traffic [or we'll have] a big jumbled mess.

### **What is the impact of a strong regional transit system?**

- Transit contributes a lot, like the airport or bike trails and parks.
- Lots of services that we may not use that are good for others in the community.
- Cheaper than paving over the town.
- Adding lanes is a lot of money.
- HOV [lanes] last longer.
- Less tax money to create a good system.
- Affect residential development — decide where live based upon commute — so transit-friendly areas might be more attractive if good system.
- Holes are filling in so we need the transportation.
- Discussion of Funkhouser's comments in the video and what the word density means — have people and services that people need to access.
- Provides access to things that people need to live.
- Cheaper for folks to get to work (low-income) spending lot of money on gas and insurance.
- Cost wipes out ability to enjoy non-necessities.

### **What is the environmental impact of public transit?**

- Would allow fewer vehicles to be on the road and improve air quality.

### **How does public transit impact property values?**

- Think it would not necessarily negatively impact property value.

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### **What is the impact of public transit on crime and safety?**

- Not really cause it to increase — not a good getaway car — need decent security to make people feel safe.
- No increase in crime.

### **Who are leaders in regional transit?**

- Clay Chastain.
- MARC.
- MARC not really do anything.
- KCATA negatively lead.
- RTA.
- Congress (U.S.).

### **What is your part?**

- Come to meetings and give opinions.
- Blue Springs transit riders fought for buses and picketed Jackson County courthouse.
- Write letters and talk to a lot of people to keep the buses going from Blue Springs.
- Many people have been riding the buses since the '80s.
- Downtown buses [don't] have many people on them at any given time, but can't get more service to the suburbs. Don't understand the problem with getting more Blue Springs buses.
- Voters and taxpayers have another role to play.
- Has to be a regional answer and a regional tax to pay for a comprehensive system.
- If we have a full bus how can it not be covering more of the cost?
- No systems pay for themselves.