

PUBLIC TRANSIT ENGAGEMENT

Sept. 12, 2007

Location: Northland Neighborhoods, Inc.

Facilitator: Dola Myers

Recorder: Karen Gordon

Staff: Liana Riesinger, Julie Wittman

Attendees: 9 (all male)

Do you use public transit in Kansas City? Why or why not?

- Five yeses.
- One says he used to a while ago.

Where do you go?

- Brookside to downtown.
- Boardwalk to 10th and Main.
- 39th and State Line to downtown.
- Boardwalk to 11th and Broadway.
- Waldo to downtown (occasionally).

Does it meet your expectations?

- Not always.

What would you change?

- Makes too many turns — can't read materials comfortably.
- They don't run on time, not reliable.
- Rough and noisy (rough turns, man fell).
- Doesn't run late enough at night up north (two comments — after 6:30 p.m.).
- One man doesn't ride now, but used to ride for 7 years. It seems to be considered low-class here.
- Lots of business commuters, crowded, varied sizes of buses, unable to predict. Older buses are very unfriendly and cramped, worse seats.
- Traffic interferes with the schedules (especially around 5-6:00 p.m.). Construction also interferes.
- City needs to do a better job in protecting bus loading zones.

Think about your daily transportation needs. How do you usually get around?

- Car for everyone.

If you typically use a private vehicle, what would you do if you didn't have access to it?

- Could actually take the bus every day.
- Varies, can walk if close destination.
- Private vehicle, would not know how to get to destinations far out such as Johnson County.
- Use a bicycle.
- Walk to the bus.

Where are your top destinations?

- Downtown.
- Airport.
- Crossroads.
- Sports complex from downtown.
- Plaza and Waldo.

Where do you need to go on a daily basis?

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

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- Olathe.
- To work (every participant).

Where do you need to go on a weekly basis?

- Parkville.
- After-hours entertainment in the evening (Westport/ Plaza).

Where do you need to go on a monthly basis?

- Everywhere.
- Sporting events/sports complex.
- Airport (two people).
- Participants would use public transportation for all of these places if possible.

If you could design the perfect public transit system, what would it look like?

- Difficult to brainstorm a perfect system when we are all on different pages of ideas.
- Need a strong planning process.
- Designers need to provide proposals of realistic possibilities first — then seek public input.
- **What modes of transit would be included?**
- Restore the streetcar system.
- Light rail equivalent here (as in Chicago).
- Metra train system (Chicago).
- Metro area needs a combination of both.
- Restore the inner urban system. It went to Olathe, Lawrence, Liberty, etc.
- Multi-modal system with light rail system and different types of shuttle buses, streetcars, etc.

What destinations would be connected? Through what areas would the route go?

- Needs to hit all of the suburbs (main suburbs).
- Train system that runs from the airport to downtown, going south all the way to I-35, connecting feeder 435 East and West, main feeder through downtown.
- Keep the bus systems going to fill in the gap between where the train can't go.
- System built on an urban planning system.
- Discussed Memphis and Dallas systems as models.
- Incorporate Union Station into the transit plan.
- St. Louis is a model to look at. At first it was problematic, but they have worked out a lot of the issues.

When would you want this system to start?

- Now (every participant voiced or nodded).

How close to your residence would it be?

- It could be close or far away.
- The main thing is to get it started and people can decide to use it or not.

How close to your destination would it stop?

- Walking distance, shuttle distance (one comment).

How long would you be willing to wait?

- 10 seconds in an ice storm.
- Not long.

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- Depends on where I'm going.

What information would you like to have available at the stops?

- Like the MAX.
- Something to tell you where the bus is (schedule).
- Any information at all would be helpful.
- Would not be a real issue with light rail.

What is the value of a strong public transit system — even if you don't use it?

- Lower taxes.
- Higher property values.
- It's a service to the community: kids/special needs populations.
- Pride in our cities — can hop on and go wherever you need to go.
- Access to places especially for the underprivileged.
- Cleaner air.
- Less stress/more social time/take a nap.
- Oil and gas prices are rising.
- Promote travel and tourism.
- A good system may attract qualified workers (higher quality of workers would come to our city).
- Younger generation needs to experience this. A good system would allow them to broaden their horizons and see more of the metro.

Do you have other outside interests or affiliations related to this issue?

- One participant is a journalist who writes about this issue.
- One participant has been a voice, push for Union Station in the past.
- One participant was on the transportation committee (light rail several years ago).
- One participant created a MySpace account exclusively for Kansas City light rail.
- One participant has written letters to the newspapers regarding the whole matter of expanding public transit.
- One participant feels he participates in the issue by speaking out and educating others within his workplace.

Comments about the forum process and how it can be improved:

- The questions and the way they are phrased makes it difficult for planners and developers to really capture what was said here today and turn it into a viable plan.
- Should have the planners go through this same process so they can see this issue.
- Wouldn't it be more productive to have the content experts be at these forums now to answers some of the questions?
- Shouldn't we have spent more time about on personal comments [rather than the scripted questions]. This is all one-way. We are not sure our real concerns will be heard.
- Concerned that the forum questions were so structured that it will not allow for a true picture of the participants' comments in order to inform the planners.
- Concern with putting this idea back on the ballot. The city [Kansas City, Mo.] needs to present a plan that will work. With it just being thrown out to the public without a plan, people won't be informed.