

PUBLIC TRANSIT ENGAGEMENT

Dec. 5, 2007

Location: Hillcrest Community Center, Grandview

Facilitator: Airick West

Recorder: Karen Clawson

Staff: Liana Riesinger, Gerri Doyle, Jim Hubbell

Attendees: 4

Do you use public transit in Kansas City?

- No, because I have three automobiles.
- (*Reporter*) Used to live downtown and used bus 80 to 90 percent of the time.
- Do not use it. No opportunity to use it now; it is somewhat inconvenient.
- No opportunity to use it in Kansas City. Wherever I am or where I want to go, transit is usually not an option. Has a friend who drives to MAX instead of parking downtown.

Do you use transit other cities?

- Tokyo and Portland. Tokyo has light rail and streetcar. Restaurants on the line. Don't have to walk more than three minutes without finding a transit stop. Got around a lot by train there.
- Yes, anytime you travel elsewhere you don't always have a car, you use transit. Tokyo has more people than KC. Transit is not convenient here; you have to wait.
- The inner city did not have garages for cars. Today, how many garages do they build with houses today? They aren't built for streetcars. We have some people who live in Loch Lloyd. Would they use transit? No, because they have garages.

What are the top three places that you need to go in the average day?

- Olathe, Kan., for friends/shopping.
- Public meetings.
- Downtown.
- Also downtown, to public meetings.
- No one is talking about how wonderful it would be to build public transit.
- Work.
- Midtown to Grandview.

Would you use transit if it served your destinations?

- Sure, saves me money, it's easier, better for the environment, makes me feel autonomous. If it was on time, most definitely.
- If it went downtown.
- Sometimes, but wouldn't use it all the time. Streetcars went all the way to 63rd street, and then GM came in. Kansas City has a lot of space and if everyone is building multiple garages then we can't have public transit.

What would it take to build an ideal region transportation system? What would it include?

- Frequent and on-time.
- Plenty of stops.
- Some buses that didn't stop too often (express). Like the one from the Red Bridge interchange.
- If you don't know where it is and when it's there, then it is useless. I get lots of information from the *Advocate*. Signage for park-and-ride system.
- Accessibility: location within a certain walking distance, people who take transit aren't largely pedestrian. Some people drive to stops.
- If you drive to the nearest park-and-ride, sometimes you might as well keep driving.
- Old streetcar system: conductor would sometimes try to make it faster.

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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- Plenty of seating.
- If you were a pedestrian and lived in an older area, then maybe you would take a bus.
- Must save money and time. Compared to a car that would be tough.

How do you pay for it?

- \$5 tax/per gallon of gas.
- Other than the fare box, it would have to be subsidized. User fees and charges, like in utility bills. If you put in a transit system you will use fare box and it must be subsidized but you wouldn't call it that. You would call it something else. Tire fees?
- Quit doing studies; put money into system instead of studying.
- Usage fee from roads, such as tolls. You could have some sort of sensor in cars that reads mileage and you are charged accordingly.
- Corporate fees; charge businesses in some way.
- Must be regional fees or everyone would be setting up shop in Stanley.
- I would use it if it were convenient to me.
- Worked at 10th and Walnut for years; walked downtown to 8th Street to catch streetcar. All streetcars were crowded. At night, theatres, some nightlife. Streetcars were only running every 20 minutes or so. The city started to spread out. Just because some guy in Virginia wants light rail doesn't mean that it will work here.

What would the impact be on property values?

- We are dealing with the future and we don't know. If we have a few lines built in the inner city. Impacts property values and given oil prices, then it will change this whole debate – property values may be impacted.
- You can't turn an auto-centric society into a transit-centered society.
- Can't agree that bringing transit would increase property values — look at Bannister Mall.
- May have some impacts but the Smart Moves map doesn't show much — a few endpoints and not much in between. Not every place will be served.
- If you want to make it regional you have to look at areas like Lee's Summit.
- You can't just build this and have a system.
- Dense areas may have an impact: the inner cities. Older neighborhoods — 10-12 houses on a block. This would be a positive impact; if they had a job and could pay for transit.
- No impact on property values. You have to use city streets for your system — go down major thoroughfare. People don't live very close to major roads like this.
- Clay Chastain has a thought and gets people to believe in it. Little research.
- We still have unused trains and streetcars rails in the city. Some are trails.

Who are the visible leaders on this issue?

- Some of the people from the video.
- Wayne Flaherty. He fought the Wizards tax in Overland Park. He is part of Transitruth. He went out to Denver and then came up with a streetcar plan. Streetcars in existing lanes.
- Dennis O'Neill, Clay Chastain, Wayne Flaherty.
- Media: Steve Kraske.

What is your role in this ongoing conversation?

- Taxpayer.
- Public forums like this.
- Voting.
- Advocacy: proponent or opponent.

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- March up and down the street with a placard (*joking*).

Other ideas/thoughts about this topic:

- Thinking about impacts: there seems to be a culture or way of thinking that would have to change for Kansas Citians to use transit — change in mind-set — car culture.
- Kansas City, Mo., voted yes, but if it is going to be regional, outer counties should have a say in the vote also. Would hate for Kansas City to have to pay for the whole thing. Everyone in the region should contribute. Regional funding mechanism for six to eight counties.
- What other agency is around other than MARC that is regional? MARC can't really do anything.
- MARC is like an octopus: The arms aren't always working on the same things. MARC is just a clearinghouse for federal funds. You would think that gas is 50 cents a gallon, and MARC wants roads to be bigger. Need some organization to get everyone on the same page.
- Who does this input go to and what do they with it?
- Would think that with all this input, people would use it.