

PUBLIC TRANSIT ENGAGEMENT

Dec. 19, 2007

Location: Leavenworth City Hall

Facilitator: Airick West

Recorder: Karen Clawson

Staff: Julie Wittman

Attendees: 11

Do you use public transit in Kansas City?

- No, doesn't exist.
- Well, some exists but it is demand service. We don't have fixed route here.

Have you used other systems outside of this area?

- Airlines are mass transit, use those a lot.
- Familiar with D.C. pre and post metro. Very efficient and goes far out into the suburbs. Houses closer to metro stops are double the price.
- Chicago, Tokyo to Osaka on train (80 mph). Shanghai has an even faster (Maglev Train).

What have been your other experiences with transit?

- Woman remembers when Leavenworth had a system. Had a public service that went to Kansas City, Kan. and Mo., down Highway 5.
- Bicycle commuting in Leavenworth is excellent. On-road paths are excellent.
- People leaving Leavenworth in the morning – bumper to bumper. Everyone commutes.

Where do you go frequently?

- Fort Leavenworth for work. You have to go a couple more miles past the gate to get anywhere. Could be a security issue for mass transit there.
- Northland on business.
- Downtown for lunch.
- Price Chopper.
- Library.
- Video store.
- Pharmacy.
- Museums to volunteer.
- Home visits.
- Legends in Kansas City, Kan. (shopping)
- Museum.

How would you get around without car?

- Bicycle.
- Walk.
- Cab, might be too expensive.
- Might have to move near work (downtown Kansas City, Mo.) or it would be too expensive.

What would the perfect regional transit system look like?

- Light-rail speed.
- Bus connections to the spine.
- Reasonably priced.
- Quiet.
- Energy efficient (buses are loud and stinky).

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

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- Safety: Having [the system] run 24/7 might require security measures, local or regional police, private security.
- Scheduling: You don't want to go somewhere and find out it doesn't come back at night.
- Wait time: You need it quick and make you feel like you are making progress to your destination.

How should scheduling be communicated to people?

- Use the Internet. It takes a slightly different mindset for people to think and plan to ride the bus. Not difficult, but you have to learn and plan.
- Lots of feedback at the stops, flashing lights that indicate train is coming.
- San Diego: staying on schedule is extremely important.
- Initial system needs to remain simple. A few stops, get people used to it. A California-level system is a hard sell; [people don't want to] give up [their] cars. Kansas City needs to start simple, run on time.
- Must go to places people want to go: work, entertainment center, etc.
- Who are the primary uses? Low income, youth, work commuters? Ms. Surbaugh talked about bringing people to work.
- People go to Sprint Center to work as well. Smart systems would keep that running all day not just for entertainment purposes.
- Concerned about that: have been stuck at entertainment venues because bus didn't run through football game.

How do you pay for it?

- Taxes.
- Stop the war.
- Combination of taxation and user fees (for the people riding it). There are no user fees for road use, but a lot for buses.
- Region as a whole needs to participate together to pay for this.
- History of a tax that crosses state lines. It has been done before.
- Property tax or sales tax. Which one? Progressive tax concerns.
- Private employers should help pay to bring in employees. But how do you do that when you gave the large corporations incentives to move to a specific location in the first place?
- If you're going to have a system, the users should pay for it.
- People want free busing, [but this is] not going to happen.
- Toll money to help with bus system.
- What about the lottery?
- Casinos.
- America became an automobile nation because U.S. helped subsidize that. We quit using trains because our money goes to building roads. Quit building roads. We subsidize roads!
- Downside to raising the gas efficiency is that gas efficiency goes up and taxes go down.
- It would take more than user fees to make it sustainable.

Would you use a new system?

- Everyone in the room said yes, but they are there (at the meeting) for transit.
- Leavenworth is a bedroom community. Quality-of-life issues are important to us.
- Elderly would use it, low income might use it.
- Elderly would still have to pay for it.

What is the value of a regional transit system? What are the impacts?

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- Never had a car in Europe. Saved him a lot of money there. Personal benefits because you could use transit. Everyone uses transit to get around. Tourists, elderly, youth.
 - People are spreading out everywhere; [we need to] keep that from happening. Economic development.
 - Would make entire metro more cohesive. People might come to visit. Makes Leavenworth part of the metro. We want to be separate but accessible by the rest of the metro. Leavenworth still considers Royals and Chiefs “theirs.”
 - It is going to take more money away from Leavenworth. People will go to Legends or Zona Rosa and not keep money in Leavenworth. There isn’t enough entertainment in Leavenworth.
 - Leavenworth has not participated enough on regional issues.
 - Are highways connected to public transit? We had transit in this town. You could ride the train downtown. Kansas City, Kan., to Leavenworth line: would love to see it again.
 - Wyandotte County Lake was an issue that killed it (loss of ridership).
 - Have been through the tunnel shown in the video.
 - There is still some track at 3rd St.
 - We had a mediocre system, but it was used by veterans going downtown to get a drink. People went to work downtown.
 - Even back then people were working in downtown Kansas City, Mo., living in Leavenworth.
 - People will have to move away from Basehor, Linwood, Tonganoxie because driving will be too expensive.
 - Blow up the bridges across the river; build our own stores, and people will use them.
 - Local economy and local tax base.
 - If we don’t have a place for seniors and kids to go, they won’t ride the bus.
 - To get service here and get people to use it would be very difficult.
 - Must be socially acceptable. Needs to be cool for younger people.
 - Kansas City doesn’t have a very good local service and walkability is poor. It will take a long time to create a good system. What about multiple destinations. Must be usable.
 - MARC has a great control that they aren’t utilizing. If we quit building the highways, then there will be something for us to accomplish.
 - Job access is very important. [There are] a lot of people with needs here; some can’t even get to the grocery store.
 - Wyandotte County is having problems getting workers out to the Legends.
 - Johnson County wouldn’t bring affordable housing in to allow for people to live close to [their] workplaces.
 - No grocery on east part of town. Some people must find rides to the store. All we need is a route down 4th St.

Who are regional leaders?

- Clay Chastain.
- Mid-America Regional Council.
- Johnson County Commission.
- Mayor Funkhouser. Someone will have to delineate what the big picture is for everyone. How does the whole thing work/fit together? “Mayor’s regional plan,” what does that mean? We don’t want to help Annabeth, she has all the money. Nobody likes buses; someone needs to articulate a grand plan. Clay Chastain has done this best so far. If it’s David Warm, fine. What about Mell Henderson?
- Mayor Reardon.
- Everyone is soft-shoeing: dancing so they don’t lose votes. Someone needs to stand up and go for it. Don’t see leadership right now. This needs to be someone’s baby — all they think about.

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- Are there any groups that are opposed to public transportation? Or, have we just not figured out what regional transit should look like?
- At some point it wouldn't hurt; MoDOT and KDOT need to get involved. Johnson County will build its own little chunk and everything will begin to fit together. We need to think ahead and think about accommodating transit for the future.
- Don't care when a road is coming; just tell us where so we can tell someone where to not buy a house. Right-of-way acquisitions are too difficult.

What is your role in this?

- Support transit by using it.
- Writing letters to the editorial page. You can learn more from that page about people's opinions.
- Advocacy and holding people accountable.
- Advocating.
- Helping more public officials that care about this issue.
- Bringing the issue to the floor.
- Help find good candidates.
- When they built the highway system, they should have built rail with it — or saved right-of-way.