

PUBLIC TRANSIT ENGAGEMENT

Oct. 15, 2007

Location: Lee's Summit City Hall

Facilitator: Airick West

Recorder: Stephanie Williams

Staff: Karen Clawson, Gerri Doyle, Mary Laird

Attendees: 23

Do you use public transit in Kansas City?

- Not here.
- I've rode the 152 into town for 5 years.
- Tried to take it for jury duty.
- Forty-six miles each way — I vanpool.
- Another woman said she rides the 152, but the parking lot where it picks her up was very dark. The new lighting helps. Gravel paving means muddy shoes in the rain. Shelters would be nice. Asphalt or paved.
- So not ride the bus — reverse commuter. The 152 does not go *into* Lee's Summit. Loves the MAX. Needs to go to the airport.
- Park-and-ride in Blue Springs has made a difference in quality of life in that community.
- One person who also rides the 152 says the 170 Woods Chapel park-and-ride is worse. Better transit system is desirable. "It starts to suck ... where it doesn't stop."
- I always stand on the bus; I like to see the bus full.
- "I rode the bus in a previous life when I lived in Midtown. I have a host of excuses [now] and none of them very good."
- Impractical. Shuttle bus from St. Luke's takes you to your door.
- I took it once last week. Started at 6:55 a.m., went downtown to Crown Center. It was interesting. Walked to Jackson County Courthouse. "I feel for people that can't afford to own an auto in this area."
- I'm here because we have a lot of hidden assets in this area that no one seems to talk about. Rock Island railroad ran from Lee's Summit to St. Louis. Goes to stadium; 26-27 miles from stadium to Pleasant Hill. It's an available right-of-way.

Have you used public transit in other cities?

- Washington, DC, Montreal (which has a huge bicycle community). I commuted for 16 years on city streets by bike. Multi-modal opportunities existed there.
- Chicago, San Diego, Seattle, Salt Lake City. Even some third-world and foreign countries (Southeast Asia, Egypt) have better public transit systems than Kansas City! They have fantastic transit systems in poorer countries.
- "If we're going to consider ourselves a first-class nation, we need first-class transit."
- I don't know the difference between light rail and regular transit.
- Portland is all above ground; that might work well for Kansas City.
- I rode it as a child. Do they still have those right-of-ways?
- I have a bicycle that costs \$3,000. I want it so I can have it to make those in-between stops. Washington, DC, has adequate size bike racks on their buses.
- I think that the ridership will increase if you can get somewhere quickly after you get off.
- I don't use the transit system. I'm disappointed; I don't see that a lot has changed.

What are your top destinations?

- Work.
- Fitness center.
- Grocery store.

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- School.
- Gas station (laughter).
- Shopping center.
- Airport.
- Restaurants.
- Cultural locations (Union Station, Nelson-Atkins, Zona Rosa).
- Downtown.
- Plaza.
- Westport.
- Johnson County.
- Sporting events.
- Doctor.
- College.
- Both work and leisure destinations. The grocery store isn't really either, but I go there all the time. Another category could be "chores."

If transit could get you there, would you use it?

- Depends on reliability/timelines.
- Amtrak is a good example: a four-hour trip winds up being an eight-hour trip. It's also really expensive.
- It's cost-prohibitive to take the kids downtown. I went on the Internet last week to try to find information on public transit — a train to Kansas. I had to wait eight hours at Crown Center.
- "KCATA customer service is atrocious." It's reflective of the level at which we fund transit in Kansas City. Per capita funding is half of St. Louis'. We're not spending for it. We're not spending the money to provide those kinds of services.
- It's hard to find information if you're not at your desk.
- I found out about vanpooling on the Internet. KCATA has a great program.
- There should be HOV lanes — encourage carpooling to get cars off the road by giving them a fast way to get to work.

What would the perfect system look like?

- Light rail has been approved, people want it. Kansas City, Mo., is dragging its feet.
- Why doesn't Lee's Summit do it? The new interchanges cost \$20 million. Add up the interchanges, and you might have the funding. A transit system should go from Lakewood to Raintree, with spurs to other places. What do we want Lee's Summit to look like in 20-30 years?
- Are the people who are outside this room going to catch up to the people inside this room? Autos are outdated.
- Just today, there was an article on Kansas City Prime Buzz about six Platte County mayors' new push for light rail. "I don't care as long as it's repealed," Funkhouser said.
- It would be running by this time next year.
- It could go along Bruce R. Watkins Dr., with intermodal stops along the way, and travel south as far as funding permits.
- Light rail in Lee's Summit is cost-prohibitive at \$50 million/mile. Funkhouser is focused on regional conflict. All of our sister cities started with short light rail systems — 3-11 miles in the beginning.
- People gotta see it in "my town." You've got to start small. It's a daunting task for any community.
- How much *could* we do?
- They've been trying for five years to get Smart Moves passed. They tried in Kansas. We should try to get federal money to double it. Smart Moves is a good concept.

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- From a man who used to work in public transit: I would take transportation out of the hands of local government. Watkins has a transit window. ATA was caught up on the Plaza, and it didn't think regional. The system should be multi-modal, with Union Station as a hub. Buses, trains, cars, taxi, and downtown feeder. It should run throughout the metro. But where is the funding?
- KCATA and MARC waste too much money. Municipalities have to look at the role in it, too. Reduce parking, put in transit — that's how you build your city, that's also how you build your transit system.
- It has to serve everybody.
- "I don't give a rat's butt about Kansas."
- Mayor Funkhouser — when's he talking to eastern Jackson County?
- Kids can't get to the library, school, college.
- "The transportation system of the future needs to be here yesterday."
- It should be an elevated system.
- The longer you wait, the more expensive it gets. If you want for density, it gets worse. Biked commuters have already been killed. Those people have paid the big price.
- I just like living in cities with light rail. You don't have to deal with traffic. Light rail is quiet and doesn't pollute.
- "A shift from auto traffic to bus traffic isn't in my fantasy. I see a reorganization in our lives. Working from remote sites. It means reorganizing the way we think, where we go, the way we plan things."
- I would like to see a multi-modal system that would run from Lee's Summit to downtown. It would be on time, with multiple options/times. The Wall Street Journal reported on a new way of taxing gas watching how much you drive rather than how much you buy.
- A pilot project could be to reactivate the Rock Island line.
- I live at Raintree, and I would love to see something a few blocks from my house and be able to go anywhere in the metro area. Nobody can get their ideas together. Groups need to get together and decide what they want.
- It should go to Raymore and Peculiar.
- I'm afraid I'm not going to live long enough [to see this happen].
- Is gas going to go up to \$100/gallon?
- We're all focused on light rail, rather than just rail. It's energy-efficient transportation.

How should we pay for a public transit system?

- Tax auto sales.
- Naming rights.
- Reinitiate the Regional Investment Fund.
- HOV lanes and parking tax downtown.
- Real estate and business — everyone benefits, so the tax should be general (income tax).
- Tolls for on- and off-ramps.
- City could fund it, or several cities.
- (What are the legal issues?)

What's the value of having a strong system?

- Properties can develop denser, pedestrian friendly areas that create more commercial viability.
- Cleaner air. Less traffic = lower medical costs and fewer accidents.
- Improved city image.
- Lower cost of living.
- Bridges gaps between people who wouldn't have the opportunity to rub shoulders.

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- On the fear of riding the bus: It's safer than driving your car. "When's the last time you heard about a killing on a bus?" The first piece comes from overcoming your fear. "People will go to [and ride public transit in] Japan and Korea, but you won't do it here."
- Fear, crime, insecurities are all barriers to using public transit.
- Public transit is safer than pulling out of your driveway.

Who or what group stands out in your mind as being a leader in regional transit planning?

- Clay Chastain.
- MARC.
- Mark Funkhouser.
- RTA.
- Other local leaders.
- Senator from Harrisonville.
- Gary Mallory.