



DRAFT PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

May 2011



CREDITS

Prepared For the Partnership Team of:

The City of Kansas City, Missouri

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

Mid-America Regional Council

Jackson County, Missouri



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HDR, Inc.



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INTRODUCTION TO DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Purpose and Need

Local officials and transit providers throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area have been working on the planning and implementation of an expanded regional transit system – the regional transit vision, known as Smart Moves, identifies a combination of urban and commuter service needs. In order to further the implementation of Smart Moves, a Partnership Team comprised of representatives from the City of Kansas City, MO; Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA); Mid-America Regional Council (MARC); and Jackson County, MO jointly submitted a proposal for Alternatives Analysis (AA) funds through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to conduct two separate but coordinated AAs for a Downtown Corridor in Kansas City, and two adjoining Commuter Corridors in Jackson County.

The Consultant Team for the Downtown Corridor is led by HDR and supported by Nelson/Nygaard; Polsinelli Shughart; Patti Banks Associates; HG Consult, Inc; Burns & McDonnell; and Architectural and Historical Research.

This analysis will be conducted per a federally-prescribed process, positioned to advance a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) that helps improve corridor accessibility, better connect our major activity and employment centers, and elevate the quality and functionality of our regional transit system. The Federal Transit Administration is financially supporting the Downtown Corridor AA, which is a required step in becoming eligible for federal funds for building a preferred project.

The AA will compare modern streetcars, with buses and “no build” alternatives leading up to the identification of an LPA. This Locally Preferred Alternative will include selecting the type of transit the community wants in this corridor, the route it should follow, and preferred financial strategies to support construction and operations. The financing options will focus on creating partnerships to leverage funding from groups near the preferred corridor, rather than through a city-wide initiative.

Components of this AA include:

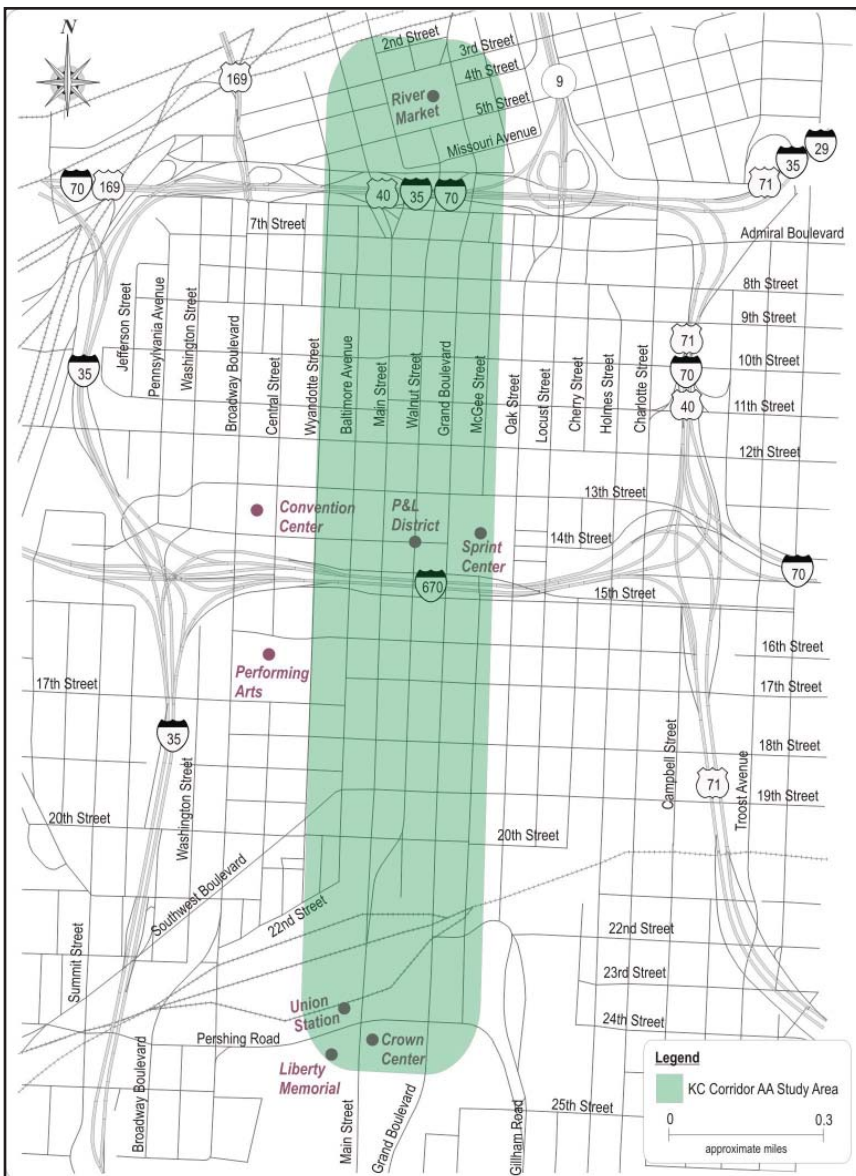
- Identifying the best downtown circulator alignment within the study area and confirm the chosen transportation mode;
- Assessing the cost, impact and budget of different options;
- Developing a viable capital and operations financial plan to secure funding for implementation and potentially apply for federal funding through New Starts, Small Starts, or other federal sources;
- Successfully engaging the local business and stakeholder community.

Previous Study Efforts

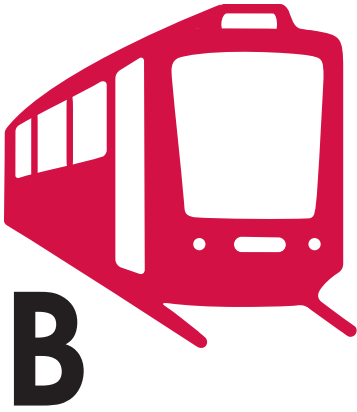
The result of this AA will be a starter line for Kansas City's future expanded regional system. Previous study efforts have been conducted that examine the feasibility of downtown transit services, but those studies did not succeed in securing voter approval for picking a single starter project and a feasible financial plan to pay for capital, operations, and maintenance. The Partnership Team will build on these previous efforts with community support, representing the best opportunity for developing **a successful starter-line** which could be a critical building block for more extensive regional transit system improvements. The Downtown Corridor AA will conclude in the selection of an LPA, including selecting both the type of transit the community prefers, as well as the route it will follow and recommended financial plan.

Study Area

The Downtown Corridor study area, as defined by Kansas City Council resolution for the FTA grant application, extends as a narrow two-mile corridor from River Market on the north, through the Central Business District and the Crossroads areas to Union Station and Crown Center on the south.



Downtown Corridor Study Area Map



WHY IS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

Foundation of Public Participation in Planning

Public participation is based on the belief that people whose lives are affected by planning and investment decisions have a right to be involved in the decision-making process and influence choices that are made. Directly engaging citizens in this process promotes successful problem solving, yields diverse voices and new ideas, and gives the public a sense of ownership of the developed solutions.

Public participation must be a proactive process in which governing bodies strive to find innovative ways to identify and engage the affected public, provide a wide variety of opportunities for interested parties to become involved, and create a meaningful process that is transparent and ensures effective communication about how public contribution influences decisions. It is also important that a public participation process be continuously evaluated and improved to ensure that all impacted communities are given a voice.

The Partnership Team is committed to a public participation process that:

- Involves the public in decisions that affect their lives.
- Ensures that the public's contribution will influence decision making.
- Communicates how the public's contribution will influence decisions.
- Is adaptable and sensitive to diverse audiences.
- Promotes respect.
- Provides equal access to opportunities, information and education.
- Ensures timely response to participants.
- Is consistent and reliable.
- Promotes continued engagement.
- Allows for flexibility and use of creative approaches.
- Maintains honesty and integrity throughout the process.
- Continuously strives to educate and inform affected and interested parties to give them a more meaningful participatory experience.
- Encourages early and active participation.
- Involves process evaluation and monitoring tools.

The Partnership Team

Representatives from the City of Kansas City, MO; KCATA, MARC, and Jackson County, MO will work together throughout the process as a foundation of partners. This Partnership Team was created through the joint submittal of the FTA grant to study the Downtown Corridor - each member of the Partnership Team has a vision of promoting the economic viability of Downtown Kansas City through the success of a Downtown circulator. In addition, the Partnership Team will continue to coordinate the Downtown Corridor AA in conjunction with planning efforts for the future Commuter Corridor projects. The roles of the Partnership Team for the Downtown Corridor AA are highlighted below, with the City of Kansas City ultimately acting in the lead decision-making role.

- **City of Kansas City, MO:** Lead Local Government Partner
- **KCATA:** Technical Support
- **MARC:** Grant/Project Administrator
- **Jackson County, MO:** Local Supporting Efforts

Purpose of the Public Participation Plan

The Partnership Team seeks to provide opportunities for input to interested parties, as well as engage members of the community who may not have been traditionally involved. The purpose of this Public Participation Plan is to provide a framework from which to guide the public participation process for the Downtown Corridor AA. The Partnership Team's underlying goals as well as strategies and techniques for public participation will be considered, as well as strategies for reaching our various target audiences.

The purpose of this plan is to provide a framework from which to guide the public participation process for the Downtown Corridor Alternatives Analysis.

The Public Participation Plan:

- Shall be developed in consultation with all interested parties; and
- Shall provide that all interested parties have reasonable opportunities to comment on the contents of the Alternatives Analysis.

In carrying out these required elements of the Public Participation Plan, the Partnership Team shall, to the maximum extent practicable:

- Hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
- Employ visualization techniques to describe plans;
- Make public information available through electronic formats, a variety of media outlets, written documentation, and other accessible formats as requested by members of the public.



GOALS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public outreach should be timely, useful and used! For the Downtown Corridor AA, public involvement will be implemented at multiple levels with the overall goal of building stakeholder support for the LPA and future financing plan.

This Public Participation Plan outlines activities, materials, and strategies that could, when implemented, function as an integrated outreach program and provide the needed education support for the Downtown Corridor AA. Patti Banks Associates (PBA) will assist the Partnership Team with implementation of an approach to public involvement that focuses on continuing contact, and reaching targeted stakeholder groups.

We plan to:

- Maximize outreach opportunities and increase responsiveness to key issues and concerns.
- Raise awareness with the public and our stakeholders about the purpose and need of this AA and how it differs from previous study efforts.
- Improve general understanding about the difference in fixed guideway alternatives, namely difference between streetcar and light rail transit.
- Build support for the Downtown Corridor AA and its resulting Locally Preferred Alternative.
- Explain the various financing strategies available and build consensus on a feasible financial plan for the preferred alternative.

Opportunities for input on elements of the AA include:

- Identification of alignment and transit mode alternatives.
- Recommended LPA.
- Available financing strategies and preferred financing plan.



TARGET AUDIENCES

Because of the diverse target audiences who will be participating in the planning process, the Partnership Team will address these groups in various ways, working together to identify, target, and strategize on how to engage our audiences.

Stakeholders is a broad term used to describe individuals or groups who are affected by, or have an interest, in a particular project or action. In this context, a variety of stakeholders will be interested in the Downtown Corridor AA, including the general public, property owners and residents along potential corridors in the study area, business groups, developers, utility companies, emergency service providers, umbrella organizations (Chambers, Councils, Commissions, etc), and elected and appointed officials at all levels of government.

Different tactics are necessary to understand, analyze, and inform all audiences:

- **First**, it is recommended to focus project efforts on **key stakeholders and individuals or small groups** to create a broader positive base of support. This will require identifying the various stakeholders that could or should be involved, and those that can best help achieve program objectives. Some of these stakeholders will be located within the AA study area, others will be identified outside of the study area but are as equally important.
- **Second**, raising general **public awareness** by informing the public that their input matters and how it relates to their daily lives.

With assistance from the Partnership Team, PBA will compile a detailed database of stakeholder groups, contact information, and meeting schedules for outreach. Additionally, PBA will work with the Partnership Team to develop a mailing list of property owners, businesses, and residents along selected corridors of the study area. PBA will use this list to schedule meetings, email project updates, and advertise public involvement opportunities.



PROCESS AND TIMING

The Downtown Corridor AA planning process began in April 2011 and is expected to conclude with the Final AA Report in late December 2011. Public input for this project will happen over the course of the planning process, particularly at key project milestones. The Partnership Team will conduct outreach by meeting with key stakeholders, targeted individuals and small groups, and the public throughout the project to share progress and obtain feedback, and will issue a coordinated series of print materials and project updates throughout the project's duration to share information.

Key milestones include:

- **June 2011** - Project Goals and Objectives, Purpose and Need, Identification of Alternatives.
- **September 2011** - Detailed Alternatives Assessment (Scoring, Cost Estimation, Environmental Screening), Financial Assessment, Locally Preferred Alternative.
- **November 2011** - Draft AA Report.
- **December 2011** - Final AA Report.



TOOLS FOR REACHING OUR AUDIENCES

As the Partnership Team works with the target audiences, it is important to remember that everyone learns in different ways, and that people have preferred methods of learning new information. Whether the audience is 100 people or a thousand people, a mix of mass communications methods and community-based approaches will yield the best results. Selection of the best delivery system for the message to the target audiences is critical for success.

Factors to be considered include:

- Size and type of audience - in this case: **key stakeholders, individuals and small groups, and the general public.**
- Geographic distribution.
- Level of awareness and education.
- Preferred formats.

Mass media approaches such as television, radio, and newspapers can be very effective to spread the word, but it is the more in-depth, person-to-person communication that brings about understanding and support.

With both types of delivery, we strive to:

- Inform the community of the project, its timeframe, challenges, decisions to be made, and how it will impact them.
- Gain understanding and support for project funding strategies used for implementation.
- Solicit input on the Locally Preferred Alternative and financing strategies.
- Develop close-knit relationships with audience members for implementation.

Today, effective public awareness and education efforts utilize a combination of technologies and methods to be relevant, create interest, provide resources, and to maintain relationships. Tools and techniques for reaching our various audiences are discussed in this Section.

All audiences will be briefed at key project milestones, including:

- **June 2011** to discuss project goals/objectives, purpose and need, and identification of alternatives.
- **September 2011** to discuss detailed alternatives assessment, financial assessment, and Locally Preferred Alternative.
- **November 2011** to present the draft AA Report (as determined necessary – the Partnership Team may decide to consolidate presentations to stakeholders and other groups at this final milestone).

Meetings with the Partnership Team

The Partnership Team will meet monthly with the Consultant Team to gain input on the AA, discuss project status, and other outstanding issues. These meetings will be coordinated by HDR and the Partnership Team. Attendance of Partnership Team members during these blocks of time will reflect level of effort at particular project milestones. In between these monthly in-person information meetings, the Consultant Team will conduct conference calls with the Partnership Team to discuss project status and other timely updates.

Meetings with Stakeholders

It is anticipated that members of the Partnership Team will coordinate meetings with public officials and civic leaders or other special interest groups prior to meeting with other stakeholder groups and the general public. The City's Parking and Transportation Commission will act in an advisory manner for this project, and will be kept informed through monthly updates.

Regularly scheduled municipal meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings, Council meetings, etc. will be used as a platform to share information and identify issues with elected/appointed officials and community leaders. Presenters will include members from the Partnership Team and/or Consultant Team, as determined in advance of each meeting. Written notes will be provided by a member of the Partnership Team or Consultant Team in attendance at each meeting. PBA, in coordination with the Partnership Team, will develop a working calendar of scheduled stakeholder meetings. This working calendar will be updated periodically.

In the event that an interested stakeholder group (not already included in the working calendar) would like to set up a time for a presentation, they will have the option to do so by contacting Triveece Harvey at PBA to schedule this meeting. Ms. Harvey's contact information will also be posted on the project's webpage. PBA will then coordinate such meeting requests with the Partnership Team to see who will be in attendance and giving the presentation.

PBA contact to schedule other stakeholder presentations:

Triveece Harvey, AICP

Email: tharvey@pbassociates.com

Telephone: 816-756-5690 ext 3038

Meetings with Individuals and Small Groups

In order to better respond to stakeholder concerns such as access management, financing, and economic development, the Partnership Team and/or Consultant Team will conduct individual or small group meetings with these parties to talk with them about their specific issues. The meetings will be held “kitchen table style” and held at a time and location that is convenient to the invitees. PBA will work with the Partnership Team to contact these individuals/groups via email or phone to confirm interest in participating in the discussion and to set a date, time, and location; other members of the Partnership Team and/or the Consultant Team will staff and support these meetings. Similar to scheduling the stakeholder presentations, if there are interested individuals or small groups not already contacted by the Partnership Team that would like to schedule a meeting, they can contact PBA to set this up. PBA will then coordinate such meeting requests with the Partnership Team to see who will be in attendance and giving the presentation.

PBA contact to schedule other individual or small group presentations:

Triveece Harvey, AICP

Email: tharvey@pbassociates.com

Telephone: 816-756-5690 ext 3038

Open Houses for the General Public

A total of three public open houses will be held for this project, scheduled around integral milestones. They serve to provide information to the public regarding the Downtown Corridor AA, gather thoughts on the Locally Preferred Alternative, gain input on the financing strategies available for this project, and inform the public on recommendations made in the Draft and Final AA.

Three public open houses will be held, scheduled around integral project milestones.

- **Timing and Staffing:** Each two-hour open house will be held in the late afternoon to early evening for the general public and media. Representatives from the Partnership Team and Consultant Team will staff the meetings during the entire period to talk individually with citizens about the project and their concerns.
- **Materials:** PBA will provide the Consultant Team with a graphic template for display boards – HDR will be responsible for production of boards related to technical elements of the AA; PBA will be responsible for creating and producing a Welcome Board, Process and Timeline Board, Contact Board, and others related to public education. PBA, in coordination with the Partnership Team for content, will design and produce handouts for each public meeting summarizing the current status of the project, schedule, feedback from the community, and more.
- **Notice:** In advance of scheduled public open houses, PBA will provide the Partnership Team with display ads that can be posted online and emailed to our database. Additionally, PBA will design and deploy display ads for The Kansas City Star. In the event the Partnership Team wishes to advertise with other media outlets, PBA will work with the Team to design those ads. The Partnership Team will utilize other methods of online media as appropriate to advertise meetings. Flyers announcing the upcoming meetings may be distributed throughout area businesses along the corridors.
- **Documentation:** PBA will provide photography for each open house. PBA will also summarize the questions/comments asked by the general public at each area of display for posting on the project webpage.

Open House #1

Open House #1 will be scheduled for June 2011 to share with the public the project goals and objectives, purpose and need of the Downtown Corridor AA, and to get feedback on the alternatives identified. Informational exhibits will focus on educating the public on the purpose of the AA, how it differs from previous efforts, the planning process, differentiation between a streetcar and light rail, preliminary remarks on financing, and how the LPA will be implemented. A formal presentation will be given by the Consultant Team at two scheduled times throughout the open house. PBA will prepare an exercise/handout to gain input on the various alternatives and early thoughts on funding strategies.

Open House #2

Open House #2 will be scheduled for September 2011 to inform how all the alternatives were screened resulting in the Locally Preferred Alternative, and find out from the public their views on feasible financing strategies that could pay for capital and operations. Informational exhibits will touch on elements shown at Open House #1, but will focus on educating the public on the screening process used to select the LPA, and detailed financing strategies that may prove to make the most impact in securing funds for implementation. A formal presentation will be given by the Consultant Team at two scheduled times throughout the open house. PBA will prepare an exercise/handout tailored specifically to gaining input on these financing strategies, in addition to asking the public to confirm the selected LPA and its screening process. If coordinated by the Partnership Team, participants of the Open House could be taken in shifts on a guided walking tour or bus tour of the preferred corridor to learn and visually see why that particular corridor was selected.

Open House #3

Open House #3 will be scheduled for November 2011 to provide citizens and stakeholders an opportunity to share feedback about the official draft plan recommendations developed for the Downtown Corridor AA. Informational exhibits will touch on elements shown at the previous two open houses, but will focus on recommendations proposed in the AA and next steps for implementation. A formal presentation will be given by the Consultant Team at two scheduled times throughout the open house. PBA will prepare an exercise/handout for participants to confirm what the Partnership Team has heard from the community, including a recommendation that the Downtown Corridor AA is approved for implementation.

Graphic Identity

A creative and consistent blueprint will be prepared resulting in the design of a graphic identity (fonts, colors, templates) that identifies the Downtown Corridor AA and builds off the look of MARC's Smart Moves plan. This graphic identity will carry forward through all distributed materials. PBA will create the graphic identity in coordination with the Partnership Team. PBA will use this graphic identity to provide templates of documents including memos, summaries, project correspondence, Powerpoint presentations, and display boards.

Project Website and Visualizations

MARC will host, manage, and maintain a project webpage for the Downtown Corridor AA within their Smart Moves website, located at www.kcsmartmoves.org. PBA will provide project materials, meeting invitations, etc. in the form of PDFs so the general public can view and download the information as necessary. HDR will provide MARC with various visualizations to graphically explain fixed guideway systems and their integration in the Downtown street network.

Media Relations

PBA, with cooperation from the Partnership Team, will produce and help distribute a series of media kits throughout the project's duration. These kits will contain media releases, fact sheets, visualizations, display ads (as appropriate), Frequently Asked Questions, and a list of Partnership Team contacts that provide updates on significant project milestones. The kits will provide a single, fluid resource for reporters putting together a story, and may also be appropriate for certain public officials or other parties who request in-depth information about the project. PBA will forward a copy of each media kit to the Partnership Team for comment. Sherri McIntyre, leading the City's role on the Partnership Team, will distribute the kit to print, broadcast, and internet media outlets as appropriate.

The preliminary schedule of media kit deployment is as follows:

- **May 2011 (1):** Announcement of Downtown Corridor AA underway, introduction to the project, planning process, how it differs from previous efforts, ultimate goals of the AA.
- **May 2011 (2 - Optional):** Invite people to visit the streetcar on display at a pre-determined location, details of June open house.
- **June 2011:** Alternatives identified, June public open house.
- **September 2011:** Locally Preferred Alternative based on detailed assessment, cost estimates, financing strategies for implementation, September public open house.
- **November 2011:** Draft AA Report recommendations, November public open house.
- **December 2011 - January 2012 (based on completion of Final AA):** City Council to pass resolution in support of Final AA Report and next steps for implementation.

If desired, PBA will work with MARC and the Partnership Team to coordinate the Downtown Corridor AA in conjunction with an airing of *Imagine KC*.

PBA is also available to write, with assistance from selected stakeholders such as representatives of Transit Action Network or others, one or more op-ed or feature newspaper articles on timely topics related to the AA.

Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions

PBA will graphically display HDR's one-page handout distributed to the Partnership Team in early May 2011 and develop a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). This fact sheet and set of FAQs will be the first in a series, introducing the project and giving background on the process. Throughout the AA, PBA will work with the Partnership Team to develop content for other fact sheets and FAQs to correspond with project milestones.

Newsletters

The Partnership Team may wish to include excerpts from the media kits or other prepared project materials in their newsletters or other communications, such as **Transportation Matters** or **ReMARC**, both produced by MARC. PBA will help in the coordination of these materials.

Social Media

Leveraging social media has become a must-do in public outreach, and can be both cost-effective and time-efficient. Content can be uploaded onto a variety of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, blogs) and video clips can go viral on sites such as YouTube. The Partnership Team will use, as appropriate, social networking sites to increase visibility of the project, capturing interest, and inspiring stakeholders who use them. MARC's KC Smart Moves has an existing Twitter feed that may be useful for distributing project updates and announcements. PBA will provide the Partnership Team with materials and information as necessary for social media networks, blogs, and message boards.

Email Outreach

Email blasts are also a cost-effective way to reach a large number of people quickly and with as much frequency as desired. The database of stakeholder addresses and property owners/residents within the study area can be expanded through events and organizations willing to share their membership. Email invitations to public meetings may be sent via email blast one to two weeks before each event.

Reaching a Broader Audience

When advertising, scheduling meetings and distributing project materials, efforts will be made to involve a broader portion of the population, including disabled persons, racial and ethnic minorities, those of limited English proficiency, and low-income populations. Upon advance request, hearing-impaired and language interpreters may be provided for public meetings. Advertising should include contact information for those needing these or other special accommodations.

Document and Incorporate Public Input

It is important to respond to comments and questions that have been submitted and explain how they are reviewed and considered. Draft responses will be prepared by the Partnership Team for consideration as appropriate. All comments will be documented and incorporated into an Appendix of this Public Participation Plan.



CONTACTS

For more information on the Downtown Corridor AA, please visit the project's webpage at www.kcsmartmoves.org or contact the following:

City of Kansas City, Missouri

Sherri McIntyre, Assistant City Manager for Infrastructure

Email: sherri.mcintyre@kcmo.org

Telephone: 816-513-1408

414 E. 12th Street
Kansas City, MO 64106

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

Richard Jarrold, Chief Engineer

Email: djarrold@kcata.org

Telephone: 816-346-0356

1200 E. 18th Street
Kansas City, MO 64108

Mid-America Regional Council

Tom Gerend, Assistant Director of Transportation

Email: tgerend@marc.org

Telephone: 816-701-8303

600 Broadway, Suite 200
Kansas City, MO 64105



APPENDIX*

- 1. Meeting Schedule**
- 2. Meeting Summaries and Results**
- 3. Other Public Comments and Responses**
- 4. Copies of Printed Materials**
- 5. Media Relations**

*Appendix materials are unavailable to include at this time, but will be incorporated into the Final Public Participation Plan.