

Regional Transit Steering Committee

Meeting Summary – June 3, 2008

Attendees

MARC – David Warm, Mell Henderson, Tom Gerend, Julie Wittman
Kansas City – Mark Funkhouser, Russ Johnson (via phone), Traci Gleason, legal department
Raytown – David Bower
Jackson County – Mike Sanders, Robbie Makinen
Liberty – Bob Steinkamp
Riverside – Kathy Rose
Platte County – Betty Knight
Clay County – David Peironnet Representing
KCATA – Mark Huffer
Kansas City Star – Jeffrey Spivak

Review of May 30 meeting

No Comments

Major issues discussed

Major issues to determine: Do we want to get regional transit on the November ballot? We need more details on how lines were chosen and what costs are.

It's ultimately the three counties (Jackson, Clay and Platte) who will decide what goes on a ballot.

Representatives generally agree that all need to work together to develop a plan everyone can stand behind. It's not critical to have a decision about whether to put this on the ballot by June 20.

Need to provide Kansas City, Mo., with clarification on the direction things are headed in their jurisdictions.

Kansas City, Mo., is moving forward on the issue without waiting. The city's Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is having a work session this week. The city will have a plan to proceed with, whether in concert with the other counties or alone.

There are some hurdles to clear with Statute 70.515, which describes how a sales tax would be collected and administered. The funding district needs a very clear governing structure that can't be legally challenged. The statute says the commission that would plan and administer the district is comprised of MARC members in Missouri which include jurisdictions outside the three counties discussing regional transit. Want to be careful not to divest decision making powers to outside jurisdictions. We can't work this out until legislature reconvenes next year. We may need to modify legislation to reflect 25 year horizon.

Does a starter light-rail line take away energy from a regional mass transit proposal? How much more difficult would it be for electeds to sell a primarily bus-based proposal if we do starter line separately? If it can't be accomplished, go with the starter line.

Need to stay in close communication with congressional delegation. Their support will be critical.

Also bring in representatives from Federal Transit Administration (such as Jim Ryan from D.C. in the New Starts program) and railroads (Union Pacific, BNSF, Kansas City Southern) as resources.

With the federal transportation legislation reauthorization next year, this is the best time to be looking at such a project. Need to study various funding mechanisms and include federal funding assumptions in assessments. It's important to take steps to maximize Kansas City's position in the funding line. Will need to be able to identify the project next spring when Congress issues a call for projects as part of the reauthorization. Local funding wouldn't need to be in place until later.

It should be possible to identify a set of priority investments by next spring. Can't expect to get funding for the whole thing at once. The current criteria for federal funding for transit are stringent enough that most of our lines don't meet them. Hope that this will change with a new administration and legislation reauthorization. Funding decisions are heavily based on density, land use and ridership – how much it costs per each new rider. They look at the scenario from day one and not in terms of promoting future development.

Commuter lines we've proposed should play out fairly well because the cost per mile is lower, plus now they would plug into a larger regional system and a light-rail spine. The more lines that can be connected, the better they all perform. Previous I-70 commuter rail study fed into a bus-only system.

Should contact the engineers (Oppenhemier, HNTB) currently working on light rail and find out their capacity to assist and at what cost.

Committee assignments

Mayor David Bower, Raytown, walked the group through tentative assignments for four subcommittees: Financial, Technical and Governance and Citizen Input. Some changes were made to the lists of names, which include representatives from all three counties on each committee, as well as some cities.

The Financial Committee will study funding mechanisms and assess the viability of the proposed regional plan. The Technical Committee will study options for the transit lines and provide technical support to other committees. The Governance Committee will study options for establishing an oversight and accountability structure. The Citizen Input Committee will create a plan to engage citizens and gather input through the process.

In the next few weeks, all committees will be convened to begin work and report early information to the Steering Committee prior to June 20.

Schedule

Upcoming Steering Committee meetings:

June 10	9:45 a.m.	Mid-America Regional Council
June 19	9:45 a.m.	Mid-America Regional Council

Next meeting of regional elected officials:

June 20	TBD	Riverside location
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