

## **Missouri Regional Transit Proposal – Technical Subcommittee**

June 19, 2008 Meeting Minutes

Ed Quick, Chair, Clay County Presiding Commissioner

### Attendees:

Clay County – Ed Quick

Clay County – Craig Porter

Clay County – Dave Peironnet

KCATA Staff – Jared Gulbranson, Dan O'Connor, Dick Jarrold

Clay County – Larry Larson

Platte Woods – John Smedley

Platte County – Daniel Erickson

Independence – Robert Heacock

Kansas City – Traci Gleason

HNTB – Wayne Feuerborn

RTA – Ron McLinden

MARC Staff – Tom Gerend, Mell Henderson, Gerri Doyle, Karen Clawson

### Summary of Key Discussion Points:

1. Begin with the Smart Moves corridors as a base.
2. Engage the railroad properties in conversations.
3. Use reasonable financial assumptions for federal funding.

### General Consensus Points:

1. Begin service discussions with the same fiscal assumptions.
2. Create some base scenarios to frame the discussion.

### Next Steps:

MARC staff will rework the service maps to highlight the Missouri side corridors to show the following:

1. On the Missouri side, the central spine will be called out and other lines will be shown as extensions.
2. Begin developing numbers to associate with each corridor.
3. Begin working with the committee to determine which corridors need to be in the system to create an equitable share for each county.
4. Provide information on congestion (travel volumes) for the committee.

Mr. Gerend began the meeting with a summary of the discussions that have taken place in previous committee meetings.

Handouts were made available to the group that provide an estimate of the miles of transit corridors in each county. The group was also provided handouts detailing the Mayor Funkhouser's proposal and Smart planning level estimates. The group discussed the example scenarios distributed to the group. Discuss mileage assumptions in the mayor's and SM proposals.

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Mr. Quick indicated that although we do not know the exact numbers the group can discuss scenarios which they like best. Mr. Gerend indicated that the Public Input subcommittee would like some scenarios to help engage the public in the discussion.

The group began discussing the issue of engaging the railroads as a part of the service design. Mr. Quick asked when the railroads should be engaged. Mr. Smedley indicated that in his discussions with other cities that the bigger railroad properties have very little interest in discussing passenger rail. With the amount of freight traffic passenger service is a very low priority.

Mr. Larson asked if there were any properties that were interested or supportive and indicated that he thought the Kansas City Southern (KCS) was supportive of passenger service. Mr. Gerend replied that the KCS has been engaged and supportive. He also indicated that a newly formed group is beginning to engage the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad regarding the abandoned Rock Island Corridor. The group discussed the numbers calculated during the I-70 AA. Mr. Henderson indicated that the numbers were not inflated to present value, but that the numbers were only a bit more than a year old.

Commissioner Quick suggested that perhaps the group should not be concentrating on stops and details at this time. Mr. Gerend suggested that if the group could agree on objectives and investment strategies by mode then staff can construct draft scenarios to begin the discussion.

Mr. Heacock suggested that the group should think about phasing the service scenarios, so that citizens get more service immediately, and LRT comes on-line as built. The group discussed the concept of phasing investments because the service operator will need time to hire employees, engineer the corridors and purchase buses. Mr. O'Connor indicated that the Troost MAX project has taken three years, and the KCATA is now waiting on the buses. Wait time for a bus is now 14-16 months.

Mr. Larson asked for clarification on the way the traffic lights are timed in a BRT scenario. The group then discussed how capital costs are distributed in the mayor's proposal because several of the corridors share track and capital costs. Mr. Jarrold indicated that the bulk of the rail costs in the corridors studied are incurred in the last 4 miles into downtown and the connection between downtown and Union Station.

Mr. Heacock indicated that the idea of commuter rail is important to Jackson County outside Kansas City, but the wait time for rail is problematic. If the system starts with BRT, then what would that system look like? He suggested that then the group look at what the system would look like with the LRT spine and then discuss adding commuter rail to the regional system.

Mr. Porter asked if the federal cost share is different between rail and bus. Mr. Gerend replied that KCATA has received more than 50 percent matching funds for the MAX like in operation and under development.

Mr. Quick indicated that he thinks this effort must be based upon a good plan that elected officials can sell to the public. He also agreed that bus rapid transit is the first best option. He

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indicated that he is afraid that rail will bog down the process, so he would suggest using the percentages from the third scenario presented to the group, which minimized rail investments.

Mr. Heacock suggested that the group take the word bus out of Bus Rapid Transit. The group needs to call the service rapid transit service, and he indicated that he believes that people could get excited about the service if stops are limited and the group invests in the stops. Mr. Smedley indicated that he believed any proposal must give folks something that looks like the service that they have in their minds.

The group discussed the purpose of the transit spine and the city's view of the spine.

Mr. Heacock suggested that the group assume that they want to build a rapid transit system. From that point the group could discuss corridors that should be included in the system. We can look at phasing the investments to give the finance sub-committee some assistance. Mr. Gerend asked for clarification from the group. He asked the group whether the group wanted to start with the service plan from which service costs would be developed, instead of working from the finances available. Mr. Heacock indicated that he believed that services should be costed in phases. For instance if the region starts with a rapid transit line, what are the basic lines that must be in the base system and which corridors should be rail?

Mr. Porter asked if the committee agreed that the Mayor's plan was too restrictive, not covering enough area? He wanted to know if the group preferred the Smart Moves Corridors. Mr. Heacock indicated that Smart Moves provided a good starting point, but indicated that there should be flexibility to deviate from Smart Moves, if necessary.

The group began discussing the composition of the regional system, equity and starting with Smart Moves. In general the group seemed to have a couple of different views on the best way to proceed. The main question the group tackled was whether to begin with the available funding or begin with a system concept and create costs for service in those corridors. This discussion included finding an equitable means to distribute service throughout the region and account for potential population and tax generation shifts between the three counties.

MARC staff provided general mileage figures for the corridors in the Smart Moves plan in Clay, Jackson and Platte Counties. The figures in Jackson County were a bit high because several corridors in Jackson County crossed the entire county, however, the entire corridor would not necessarily be included in this service proposal. In general, the group seemed to concur that creating a functional regional system was critical, and that Smart Moves corridors provided a good starting point for the creation of the regional system.

As the group worked through the questions of equity and service mode, assumptions were discussed in several contexts. The group was concerned with the possibility of receiving federal funds and insuring that assumptions are reasonable. In addition, the group discussed making sure that assumptions for growth are reasonable, as well.

Mr. Quick asked the group when they would decide whether a 15 year tax would be sufficient, but there was no consensus within the group on when a decision would be made. In general

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several participants liked the idea of using bus rapid transit to enhance coverage of the region and flexibility to craft service to individual markets.

Mr. Gerend suggested updating the draft scenarios presented to the group with numbers consistent with the Mayor's proposal. He suggested that constraining the conversation to what we know we can afford may help give everyone perspective of the opportunities and constraints.

Finally, the group discussed the information that would be presented at the regional forum to be held June 20, 2008. The group decided to present conceptual ideas and the proposed service development process to the group.

Before adjourning, the group discussed congestion in the metro area. MARC staff was asked to provide congestion information for the Smart Moves corridors. However, Mayor Smedley cautioned the group that the numbers we are using to design services today have been surpassed by actual volumes in rapidly growing areas. The group discussed the issue of highway funding and other issues that are making transit a more popular option. Members suggested inviting MoDOT to participate in the transit discussions, as well as, representatives from the railroad.