

### **Talking points for Coalition members**

Mayor James and County Executive Sanders agree that investment in rail transit is crucial to the future of this region. They have talked about both the streetcar project and the regional rail project and are in agreement about their importance to jobs and economic growth in the Kansas City region.

Any rail proposal will tie into the streetcar under development from Union Station to River Market.

The Mayors of the suburban communities are supportive of Regional Rail and are anxious to find out the results of the Alternatives Analysis study being conducted by the Mid America Regional Council.

The current study is different than previous rail plans that Kansas City has voted on in the past. The current corridor studies are supported by Jackson County, Kansas City, MARC and KCATA. The results will be a recommendation for transit improvements --- perhaps regional rail – that everyone can get behind and support and not something that is unaffordable and unbuildable that has been before voters many times in the past.

Whatever the plan, regional rail - maybe bus or fast streetcar - we will know from the study that the region will be able to afford to build and operate it unlike other plans that have been put before the voters.

The Kansas City Metropolitan Area is one of the largest in the country without rail transit. Detroit and Orlando are the only two bigger cities, and Orlando is in the process of building a system. Smaller cities such as Austin, Charlotte and Virginia Beach already have operating rail transit systems.

Jackson County is thought to have some of the most affordable housing in the country. But when you add in the cost of transportation to housing, more than half the households in the Kansas City region spend more than 45% of their income on housing and transportation.

The median income of a household in the greater Kansas City area is \$46 thousand per year. If that household could reduce its auto ownership by one vehicle, they would have an extra \$7 to \$9 thousand a year to spend on other things such as shopping, entertainment, education.

If we end up moving forward with rail, another aspect will be to make sure we improve the bus system so that riders will enjoy seamless connections to the rail.

The system will operate in both directions .... Not only getting riders into downtown, and Crown Center, but also getting Kansas City workers to jobs in Independence, Blue Springs, Raytown, and Lee's Summit.

Economic Development is another reason we need to consider this investment. Elected officials already are getting calls from developers wanting to know where the rail stations will be. We've not gotten one call from a developer about where a bus stop will go.

There are hundreds of building opportunities along these proposed corridors for development --- more people want to live closer in, to be near shopping and entertainment --- have a chance to walk to school, church --- rail makes those types of neighborhoods.

Just as the interstate highway system shaped our region from the 1960s to today, Jackson County has an opportunity to make that highway investment work more efficiently while giving people transportation choices. We don't have the space to continue widening highways at a reasonable expense.

If Jackson County builds on the spine of a system, our neighboring counties will be able to tie into the system at a future date.

Regional Rail and the trail system can easily co-exist in the same right of way.

The study will be completed in the Spring of 2012. At that point we will know where the stations will be, the approximate cost to build the system and the mode (bus, rail, streetcar) that will be used.

Once the alignments are selected the region will have to settle on a financing plan. The region will seek federal funding to build the system. Local funds will be needed as well. A plan will be developed to seek voter approval to build the system. This will be done by a campaign committee which is separate from the Coalition.

Most transit trips are used to get people to jobs.