

August 2006

Controversy over the MoDOT Paseo Bridge Draft EIS

(See column 4)

RTA

Transit Calendar - 2006

August 7-9: Kansas Public Transit Association (KPTA) Annual Conference

September 17-19: RTA participates in Leadership Exchange trip to Minneapolis

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Join the RTA Grassroots Regional Advocacy Network

Join the RTA's free advocacy network to pass enabling legislation in Kansas to create a regional funding mechanism for public transit (Missouri passed this legislation in May 2006) Legislators want to hear from their constituents that this issue is important to them.

Advocacy to develop ballot initiatives after the enabling legislation is in place will be the next step.

Go to www.kctransit.org to join and let the RTA know of individuals or groups that we should contact.

Major RTA Corporate Sponsors:

Heros: Commerce Bank
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Newsletter Editor: Janet Rogers

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Historic Kansas City PC Streetcar



Renovations progressing for a September arrival in Kansas City

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More Americans Leave Car Keys on Coffeetable as Cities Report Rising Transit Use

At \$3 and often more per gallon, gas prices "have led a whole new group of drivers to park their cars and use public transportation," including professionals who never would have taken transit before, reports *Wall Street Journal* writer Mike Spector, noting that transit use increased by 1.3 percent last year nationwide, but much more recently in some of the most congested metro areas - in Denver by 4 percent in March; in Dallas by 10 percent between August and April; and in Los Angeles by 10 percent for buses and almost 17 percent for Metro Rail in May.

A former car snob admits, "Driving is pretty stressful but the bus ride is "like a 30-minute vacation."

The complete story at Smartgrowth and Wall Street Journal (6/20/06)

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/news/article.asp?art=5504&state=52>

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More on Downtown Streetcar Concept

Last month we reported the RTA is working with the Downtown Council, KCATA, the Convention and Visitors Association and the private sector on a public/private partnership transit concept between Crown Center, the Power & Light Entertainment District and the Convention Center District. Here is more information on this project.

The route has not been defined but in principal the system would act as one element of a circulator system for the downtown area, complimenting the MAX BRT system. It would intersect MAX at two points, possibly three. Typical of a streetcar system, stops would be less frequent than buses, more frequent than BRT. By providing an East-West connector to MAX it will enhance the MAX system.

The system would be integral to transit operations downtown and with the more extensive, regional systems envisioned in *Smart Moves*. RTA is working closely with KCATA to insure this integration.

No determination has been made on the type of system. Both steel wheeled and rubber tired systems are being reviewed.

As envisioned, private sector funds plus in-kind donations from the public sector would be used to construct the system. Taxpayers will NOT be asked to support construction of the system.

Mark McDowell, RTA President

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RTA Speakers Bureau

The RTA is firing up the Speakers Bureau to discuss the Regional Investment Fund and *Smart Moves*. This regional transit issue is important to the whole community.

Please contact Greg Lever at www.kctransit.org or 816-471-6808 to organize a speaker for your group. Be sure to get us on your calendar.

Additionally, please contact Greg if you are interested in joining the Speakers Bureau.

Controversy over the MoDOT Paseo Bridge Draft EIS

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing to reconstruct and widen Interstate 29/35 with new interchange configurations, bridges and roadways in Clay and Jackson counties. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been prepared for public comment.

The **RTA**, in collaboration with AIA Kansas City, Downtown Council, and the Kansas City Design Center, submitted a formal written response to the DEIS issued by MoDOT and FHWA for the Paseo Bridge corridor.

As part of its response, **RTA** contracted with Glatting Jackson, a nationally-acclaimed transportation engineering and community planning firm based in Orlando, Fla., to undertake a technical analysis of the DEIS to ensure its compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Glatting Jackson's report identified several critical flaws in the Draft EIS, including the auto-oriented focus of the project, which led MoDOT to exclude transit and bicycle/pedestrian accommodations on the bridge. Glatting Jackson also found that MoDOT failed to adequately account for adverse impacts of the project on neighborhood conditions in the Columbus Park area and the local street network.

RTA is committed to helping MoDOT and FHWA achieve success on the I-29/I-35 Paseo Corridor project, but remains concerned about the lack of consideration given to the **Smart Moves** public transit strategy. MoDOT is expected to issue a Final EIS later this summer.

Daniel Serda, Ph.D., Executive Director/CEO
Kansas City Design Center
RTA Board Member

MoDOT's Executive Summary of the DEIS is available on its website.

http://www.modot.org/kansascity/major_projects/I-29,I-35%20EIS%20&%20Location%20Study.htm

Global Warming and the Transit Solution

Global warming is happening. Al Gore made a convincing case in his recent movie, "An Inconvenient Truth," as did Tom Brokaw in a Discovery Channel special a few weeks later.

The earth's temperature is rising, and much of the rise is due to burning fossil fuels – oil, coal, natural gas. Burning these fuels produces carbon dioxide, a gas that traps the sun's heat in the earth's atmosphere.

"Global warming" may sound benign, but it isn't. As the earth warms, storms become more severe and weather patterns shift. Ultimately – perhaps as early as 2050 – we reach a "tipping point" beyond which so-called "feedback loops" take over and climate change becomes irreversible.

Part of the solution is to reduce our use of fossil fuels. Ironically, the high price of gasoline will help. It's hovering near \$3.00 per gallon again, and likely to go higher as world oil demand outstrips supply.

Other forms of energy – natural gas and electricity – are also getting more expensive, and that'll encourage us to practice greater energy efficiency in our homes.

Using public transit can be part of almost anybody's contribution to solving the global warming problem – if not daily, then at least once a week. Call 816-221-0660 for help in working out your personal transit plan or use the ATA's eTrip Planner, www.kcata.org.

I'll board a hundred buses this month as I get around town. Will I see you on one of them?

Ron McLinden
RTA Board Member

September Newsletter:

Smart Moves and Your Community - Liberty, MO and Prairie Village, KS

TRANSIT NEWS

KANSAS CITY
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