

CITIZENS FOR EFFECTIVE,
SENSIBLE & MODERN TRANSIT

December 2006

Direction of Regional Transit Initiative

(See column 4)

RTA

Transit Calendar – 2006

December 7-8: Public hearings regarding the City of KCMO Zoning ordinance, including the RTA initiative to amend parking requirements. The 7th is at the Discovery Center, 4750 Troost, 6 p.m. and December 8th is at City Hall 6th floor forum, 10 a.m.

RTA

Historic PCC Streetcar

The renovation is finished and the streetcar is here. The RTA website www.kctransit.org has lots of pictures of the renovation process of the streetcar along with its story. The beautiful cream-colored car #551 has Dupont Emron paint that will keep the streetcar looking good for at least 20 years since it is going to be under a shelter at Union Station. Plans are underway for a dedication ceremony and the annual fundraising event for its maintenance. Check the website for details.

Major RTA Corporate Sponsors:

Heros: Commerce Bank
Partners: Kansas City Power & Light; HNTB; TranSystems; Stinson Morrison Hecker; YRC Worldwide; Convention & Visitors Assoc.



Historic PCC Streetcar

RTA

RTA Forms the Coalition for Regional Transit

You can help energize regional transit!

The Kansas City Regional Transit Alliance (RTA) invites you to join the **Coalition for Regional Transit**, a group of organizations and individual members that support regional transit. The Coalition has been formed to educate and engage supporters on regional transit issues. Elective officials need to hear from their constituents that regional public transit is important to them.

The Coalition for Regional Transit is an effort to build upon the success of the Regional Advocacy Network by creating a comprehensive advocacy group of both supportive organizations and individual members. Thus, the nearly 5,000 RAN members are automatically members of the Coalition for Regional Transit.

Members will receive action alerts and periodic e-mails about important public transit issues, as well as action alerts to contact elected officials and encourage them to support regional transit.

If your organization is interested in more information on joining the Coalition please contact **Greg Lever** at glever@kctransit.org or **816.471.6808**.

RTA

Plug-In Hybrid Vehicles Come to KC

The end of November saw the introduction of several Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV) on the KCATA #247 Westside MetroFlex route. These new buses are ADA accessible, and equipped with a wheelchair lift and tie downs. The buses are quieter than normal buses when in operation and they are green to help you identify them with cleaner energy.

ATA is part of a three-city test using small hybrid vehicles with plug-in technology. The vehicle is a modified Dodge Sprinter from DaimlerChrysler. ATA expects a 25% or more savings on fuel and a reduction of harmful CO₂, NO_x and VOC emissions. KU will be tracking emissions.

The bus has a much larger battery that can drive up to 20 miles on electric-only power but the diesel engine supplements the electric motor for increased energy when needed and extends the range.

The PHEV plugs into the electric grid to recharge its state-of-the-art batteries. It is an alternative to petroleum-powered vehicles and helps reduce dependency on oil imports.

The Federal Transit Authority made this project possible through the historic formation of its first ever Joint Partner Project and \$1.1 million in federal funds.

The On-Grid Hybrid Electric Bus Consortium made this project possible through new technologies. The Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC) and the Electric Power Research institute (EPRI) conceived and designed the on-grid electric bus project. EPRI developed the battery system used.

The ATA continues to implement new transit technologies such as real-time arrival signs at MAX stations, and automated on-board announcements using global positioning satellite technology.

Regional Transit Initiative

With the November elections behind us, the **RTA** will continue to pursue the dialogue it began in October 2006 with the elected officials in Johnson County. The discussions need to be expanded to include other pertinent parties such as The JO, Johnson County Board of Commissioners, Unified Government Transit, the Unified Government Board of Commissioners and various Chambers regarding the growth of public transit service and how to pay for it on the Kansas side of our region.

In Missouri, there is a regional funding mechanism in place, but the recent passage of the light rail proposal brings more questions than answers to community leaders regarding how this measure will impact delivery of a regional plan. Mayor Kay Barnes has taken a positive stance on this issue and has instructed the City's Washington lobbyist and other City staff to identify some of the critical issues (i.e. federal funding, other political subdivisions impacted by this vote) in this measure and provide answers regarding such issues to the Council in January. At that time, the City will weigh the information and consider next steps. The Mayor clearly stated that the bulk of the work to be done on this will need to be undertaken by the new Mayor and new Council since the City elections are only three and four months away.

The **RTA** is also continuing its work in developing the Coalition for Regional Transit. Several organizations have committed to work with us to make sure that the importance of public transit for the region will be delivered in a positive and consistent message to the elected officials at all levels throughout the region. This new feature of the Coalition will complement the efforts of the thousands of individual members that have been actively engaged in the Coalition since the fall of 2005.

Greg Lever
RTA Executive Director

MoDOT Final EIS

On Friday, November 17, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Paseo Bridge - I-29/I-35 Corridor. The FEIS identifies a preferred alternative that would replace the existing Paseo Bridge with either one or two river crossing structures, or rehabilitate the existing suspension bridge for southbound traffic while constructing a new northbound span just downstream of the existing bridge.

RTA and its civic partners are reviewing the FEIS and expect to submit a formal response during the 30-day public comment period. Significant concerns remain about the degree to which the changes proposed by MoDOT will facilitate public transit right-of-way and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, both of which are key transportation innovations needed to balance growing automotive traffic with alternative modes of commuting.

Also left unresolved by the FEIS is the question of how and to what extent the proposal will accommodate light rail, which was approved by Kansas City, Missouri voters on November 7. The Kansas City ballot initiative calls for a light rail crossing on the Heart of America (HOA) Bridge, where MoDOT has made a commitment in the FEIS to build a bicycle and pedestrian crossing by 2012. These questions need to be resolved by the City of Kansas City and MoDOT, which will undertake a separate environmental impact study for the bike-ped crossing.

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

January Newsletter:

Review the last two years of Kansas City transit development and celebrate the second anniversary of this **RTA** newsletter

Newsletter Editor: Janet Rogers

