

February/March 2006

Smart Moves and Your Community

(See column 4)



Transit Calendar – 2006

February 7: Transportation Day in Jefferson City

April 22: Earth Day-Shawnee Mission Park

May 17: Annual RTA meeting North Kansas City
Community Center



Public Health and Public Transportation

“Two trends, increasing numbers of chronic patients and increasing dependence on outpatient care, demand more investment in community and public transportation,” Maureen Hensley-Quinn writes in *Community Transportation* magazine.

As the population of Americans aged 65 and older increases from 35 million to 65 million by 2025, the number of disabled people is expected to grow to 24 million.

New medical technology has transformed many expensive hospital treatments into outpatient treatments for cancer, diabetes and kidney disease. Outpatient care increased by 11% in 2004.

As the population of elderly Americans grows, and with it the number of ill or less-mobile individuals, the public transportation infrastructure will have to grow. Currently more than 21% of all seniors don't drive.

These numbers hold serious consequences for both public health and public transportation.

Although the *Americans with Disabilities Act* requires public transportation agencies to provide paratransit services along fixed routes, many frail or chronically ill older adults won't live on those routes and can't use traditional public transportation.

Linda Bailey of the *American Public Transportation Association* sums up the problem: “The United States is currently ill-prepared to provide adequate transportation choices for our rapidly aging population. Alternatives to driving are sparse, particularly in some regions and in rural and small-town communities. As the number of older people increases, so to will their mobility needs. How the nation address this issue will have significant social and economic ramifications.”

Kansas City has a plan called *Smart Moves* that will address many of these issues by providing a regional transit system so everyone in eight counties will have better access to public transit. Many of the communities in the plan have curb-to-curb service similar to Lee's Summit MetroFlex. This type of service helps elderly citizens that don't need paratransit but still have difficulty getting to a bus stop.

For more information on this topic see the November-December 2005 edition of *The Futurist* magazine.



MARC Proposes Legislation

Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has proposed legislation in Missouri and Kansas to authorize citizens in eight counties in the KC metro area to vote on regional tax initiatives, primarily for public transportation. The eight counties are Ray, Clay, Jackson, Platte, and Cass

in Missouri and Leavenworth, Wyandotte and Johnson in Kansas.

Senator Chris Kostner (R-Cass County) has sponsored and introduced the bill, SB 825, in the Missouri Senate.

The bill would allow voters to approve, on a county-by-county basis, up to a 1/2 cent retail sales tax. It would create a mechanism to raise and distribute funds across the metro area for public transit, trails, greenways and traffic management. It would make the plan fully accountable to voters by defining specifics such as the amount and duration of the tax and a clear explanation of how the funds would be overseen and distributed.

To see the proposed legislation go to <http://www.marc.org/transmat/fullstory.htm#legislation> and open the Proposed Legislation pdf file.

For more information see MARC publication *Transportation Matters*.



MARC Transportation Funding Survey Results

MARC has released a new poll that finds residents overwhelmingly want the option to vote on a regional sales tax to fund public transportation, greenways and traffic management improvements. Over 78% of people surveyed in the metro area thought legislation should be passed allowing citizens to vote on these issues and a majority said they would support a regional sales tax including more than 60% polled in Johnson, Clay, Jackson and Platte counties.

For more information go to

<http://www.marc.org/archives/transportationsurvey2005.htm>

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RTA Smart Moves and Your Community

What does *Smart Moves*, the proposed Kansas City regional public transit system, provide your community?

Smart Moves is a 20-year plan. Services will be implemented in stages and there will be changes from today's plan. However, the basic structure will be the same.

Freeway Flyers serve major employment centers, connecting suburbs to each other and the metropolitan core, every 15 to 30 minutes on main freeways. Off-peak service is provided by *Local Link* and *Rapid Rider* services.

Local Links are the foundation of the *Smart Moves* system providing service for local communities and connections to cross-regional *Rapid Rider* services.

Rapid Riders provide faster than bus and more frequent service to major activity centers and attractions along key routes. Vehicles run every 6 to 20 minutes in the peak hours in most corridors, with midday, evening and weekend services every 10 to 60 minutes. The new MAX route is the first *Rapid Rider* service.

Following are examples of proposed new services. Other communities will be featured in future articles.

Blue Springs, MO

Smart Moves will provide a high level Freeway Flyer commuter service in the I-70 corridor starting in Grain Valley. Commuters will be able to return to the park and ride lots during the middle of the day using *Local Link Connectors*. (Commuter rail is assumed. Study results are pending.)

A *Local Link Connector* will operate on Highway 40 from Independence to Highway 7 and on Highway 7 between Highway 40 and the Blue Springs transit hub north of Highway 70.

Additionally a flexible *Local Link Circulator*, similar to the current service in Lee's Summit, will pick up and deliver passengers curb to curb. This service will include both Blue Springs and Grain Valley.

Transit centers will link Blue Springs to the region.

Olathe, KS

Freeway Flyers will continue to provide commuter service and return trips during the mid-day will be possible using new *Local Link Connectors*. A fixed guideway route along I-35 is being studied in Johnson County.

Local Link Connectors will serve Olathe and Overland Park. A fixed *Local Link Circulator* will provide additional service currently served by the K route.

A flexible *Local Link Circulator* is planned in Olathe.

Transit centers will link Olathe to the region.



RTA Creating a Grassroots Regional Advocacy Network

The RTA's Grassroots Regional Advocacy Network is growing daily. Vital messages need to be sent to state legislators in the near future as the Missouri and Kansas state legislatures get under way this session.

Join the RTA's advocacy network to pass enabling legislation to create a regional funding mechanism for public transit in Kansas and Missouri by visiting www.kctransit.org. Legislators want to hear from their constituents that this issue is important to them.

Please let the RTA know if you know of individuals or groups that we should contact.



April Newsletter:

What Rapid Rider services are planned in *Smart Moves*?

TRANSIT NEWS



MAILING LABEL