

November 2006

Update-MoDOT Draft Environmental Impact Study for the Paseo Bridge

(See column 4)



Transit Calendar – 2006

November 8: RTA presentation to the Commission on Aging

November 20: Scheduled installation of the historic Kansas City PCC Streetcar at Union Station

December: Dedication of the renovated historic Kansas City PCC streetcar-see www.kctransit.org for final details.



Historic PCC Streetcar Pictures

The renovation work continues and the final work is about done. All of the metal has been re-fabricated and the final preparations for painting have been completed. The painting process will be completed the week of October 30th. The RTA website www.kctransit.org has lots of pictures of the renovation process of the streetcar along with its story. The car is scheduled to begin its journey to Kansas City the week of Nov. 13 with an installation date scheduled for Nov. 20 (depending on the weather). Plans for the dedication ceremony and the annual fundraising event for its maintenance should be in early December. Check the website for details.



KCATA Expansion Plans for Bus Rapid Transit

Dick Jarrold of KCATA reported to the RTA Board that MAX (Metro Area Express) has been such a huge success that KCATA is planning to upgrade another line to a BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) service.

The #25 Troost route is the ATA's busiest line. This route carries approximately 7,800 riders daily and it takes 60 minutes to travel the 13-mile distance from downtown to 88th and Hillcrest. ATA is beginning the required federal planning process to add a BRT system along this route, a planning process that can take nine months to a year. In 2007, the ATA expects to begin engineering and design for operation in 2009. This expansion is a great example of improving the public transit system with a complete plan by people with experience and a successful track record.

KCATA General Manager, Mark Huffer, says the FTA (Federal Transportation Administration) is citing the ATA's MAX system as an example of bus rapid transit being done right.

Additional BRT routes are being considered where ridership numbers support an upgrade to the system. All of these plans depend on the funding situation.

Companies that Subsidize the Monthly Bus Pass

In October the RTA recognized many companies that support public transit by providing transit benefit packages to employees by fully or partially paying for monthly bus passes.

Faultless Laundry Company should be added to that list and we thank them for their active participation in transit issues.



Why Question 2 (the Clay Chastain proposal) doesn't add up for Kansas City

Kansas City has a 1-cent state authorization for transit sales taxes. Currently Kansas City is using 7/8-cent to support the transit system. This 7/8-cent tax consists of 1/2-cent as a long-term base, and a voter approved 5-year 3/8-cent tax that will expire in 2009.

If voters pass Question 2 on November 7:

- The 3/8-cent tax that provides the vital funding for the current level of transit service would be diverted to the Chastain proposal beginning in 2009. The KCATA would have only the 1/2-cent base tax to continue running the Metro, and would cause an immediate 40% cut from the current level of transit service.
- This would leave the KCATA with no choice but to turn to the voters once again to try and secure the remaining 1/8-cent tax for transit. That would only restore a fraction of the current service.

What about Smart Moves?

- The Smart Moves plan calls for a county-wide sales tax.
- If voters pass Smart Moves in addition to the Chastain proposal, then Kansas City residents would see a significant increase in sales tax.
- If Question 2 fails, then Smart Moves can replace the current 5-year 3/8-cent sales tax and Kansas City residents would not have a tax increase. Instead, residents of the rest of the counties would join city residents in funding an integrated regional transit service serving all of the counties that passed it.

The RTA opposes Question 2

Update-MoDOT Draft Environmental Impact Study for the Paseo Bridge

Last spring, **RTA** joined forces with the Downtown Council, Kansas City Design Center, and AIA Kansas City in submitting a written response to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) prepared by the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) for the I-29/I-35 Paseo Corridor. **RTA** also commissioned a technical review of the Draft EIS by Glatting Jackson, a transportation engineering firm renowned for its expertise in balancing auto-oriented transportation proposals with transit-and pedestrian-friendly strategies based on sound environmental, mobility, and urban design principles.

RTA's comments are among those submitted for more than 20 Organizations and public agencies. Given this overwhelming display of Community concern about the content of the Draft EIS, FHWA is requiring MoDOT to reconsider some aspects of the Draft EIS, as well as undertake additional study on key issues identified by the public comments.

For example, over the summer, in response to FHWA and in partnership with MARC, MoDOT conducted a Bicycle/Pedestrian Missouri River Crossing Feasibility Study. The study identified four potential crossing options:

- 1) a new dedicated bicycle/pedestrian bridge extending from the foot of Main Street at the Town of Kansas archaeological site to the Harlem district in North Kansas City;
- 2) improved bicycle/pedestrian accommodations on the Heart of America Bridge;
- 3) a crossing on the new Paseo Bridge; and
- 4) a crossing on the ASB Bridge.

Based on the study, MoDOT has committed to building a river crossing on the Heart of America Bridge, to be under construction by state fiscal year 2012 (July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012). This commitment for approximately \$2.3 million in improvements will be included in the Final EIS.

In late October, MoDOT submitted the Final EIS for the Paseo Corridor to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for legal review. Upon its release by FHWA, the Final EIS will be subject to a mandatory 30-day public comment period. MoDOT expects to receive a Record of Decision (ROD), which serves as formal approval to undertake construction of the proposed improvements, by the end of the year.

RTA will continue working with its local civic partners to provide appropriate feedback on the Final EIS and ensure that Smart Moves and other transit-friendly options are included in the final environmental approvals and procurement process for the new Paseo Bridge.

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

Leadership Exchange

The **RTA** recently participated in the 2006 Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce Leadership Exchange Conference in Minneapolis. Public transit was a major topic at the conference. The **RTA** co-sponsored a panel discussion on public transit with a group of over 100 community leaders, including our three local transit agencies. Through our participation in the Chambers Public Policy Council the **RTA** gains recognition as a recognized leader in the Kansas City community.

December Newsletter:

What happens next with the Regional Investment Fund?

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