

**Summer 2007**

## **Review of the RTA Annual Meeting (See column 4)**

**RTA**

## **Transit Calendar – 2006**

**August 4:** Explore the Core 10:20am - 12:30pm

This is a fun 2-hour course that teaches you how to ride the bus, learn about transit in the Kansas City region and tour the new downtown library.

Register at: <http://www.umkc.edu/commu/> or by phone at 816-235-1448. For more information, contact David Doyle at: [ddoyle269@aol.com](mailto:ddoyle269@aol.com)

**RTA**

## **Newsletter Editor Change**

Janet Rogers has been Editor of the **RTA** newsletter since January 2005. We would like to thank her for all the hours and hard work that went into producing this newsletter. Janet is now the Treasurer of the **RTA** and serves on the steering committee for the Mid-America Regional Council's new Smart Moves Update program.

Margie Richcreek  
RTA Chairperson

**RTA**

## **September Newsletter:**

Update on Light Rail Alternative Analysis

Summer Newsletter Editor: Greg Lever

**RTA**

## **Bus Rapid Transit on Troost comes closer to reality**

U.S. Senator Kit Bond and Transportation Secretary Mary Peters have announced \$6.3 million in additional funding for the Troost Bus Rapid Transit line. The total now funded for this route is \$18 million with an additional \$6 million expected to be recommended by President Bush in the 2008 budget.

ATA officials see this as a sign that the Federal government likes what has been happening with the MAX bus route between the City Market and the Plaza and wants to keep the momentum going for quality transportation in Kansas City, Missouri. The ATA expects to go forward with bus rapid transit on Troost regardless of what decisions are ultimately made about light rail.

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## **Light Rail contest sponsored by RTA and the Kansas City Design Center**

The Regional Transit Alliance (**RTA**) recently joined the Kansas City Design Center in co-sponsoring a competition to evaluate how light rail could stimulate established neighborhoods and encourage sustainable growth in new communities.

Five teams entered the contest, and three teams made it to the second round of judging. The winner, BNIM Architects, proposed a plan with light rail going along Main and Grand from Midtown across the river to Harlem, just east of the downtown airport. Their proposal shows how light rail might encourage new investment and reduce the need for additional parking along the route. Another proposal was submitted by a team affiliated with the City of Olathe. Their proposal fell outside the area designated by the official guidelines, but acknowledged the need for a regional transportation system such as Smart Moves for the Kansas City region.

All of the proposals have been shared with the Kansas City City Council and with the partners in this competition. A public presentation of the winning idea and an exhibit of all the work submitted for the competition was held the evening of June 5, 2007 at the downtown Kansas City Library.

Other co-sponsors of the competition included the Downtown Council of Kansas City, the Light Rail Task Force of the Northland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Kansas City Homebuilders Association.

**RTA**

## **Regional transit plan gets an overhaul**

Transit is a high-profile issue in the region right now. Significant local and regional planning activities are in progress and the community has expressed a desire for improved public transportation solutions. In response to these events the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is leading a comprehensive update of the Smart Moves regional transit plan to incorporate this recent activity.

The Smart Moves update process will provide an opportunity to incorporate what is being planned at the local level, identify new connections and services for key corridors and activity centers throughout the region, reflect light rail planning and other technologies, and continue to concentrate on linking community-based services through transit.

This fall MARC will conduct more than two dozen public meetings to engage citizens and local governments around the region — first to focus on identifying transit needs, and later to evaluate alternatives and solutions. This will help make sure that the updated Smart Moves plan reflects current public opinion and desires. This input will be incorporated into the Alternatives Analysis process the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority is conducting regarding light rail.

Details about upcoming public engagement events will be available on the Smart Moves Web site at [www.marc.org/kcsmartmoves](http://www.marc.org/kcsmartmoves).

## RTA Annual Meeting program on Light Rail in KC a success

The **RTA** Annual Membership Meeting took place on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 with just under 200 people in attendance. The panel discussion on "Building Light Rail in Kansas City," moderated by Steve Kraske of *The Kansas City Star* and KCUR's "Up to Date" radio show, featured Ed Ford, KCMO City Council and former KCATA Commissioner, Jim Graebner, Consultant with the Lomardo Group in Denver, Mark Huffer, General Manager of the KCATA, Joni Roeseler with the Federal Transit Administration Regional Office and Tom Shrout, Executive Director of Citizens for Modern Transit in St. Louis.

The evening's discussion began with a video presentation that was produced by the **RTA** and narrated by former **RTA** Board member, Wendall Anschutz. This video revealed a lot about what typical voters were thinking, or not thinking, about when they voted on the light rail plan at the polls in November 2006. Wendall interviewed people from throughout Kansas City and found that while many voted for the plan, they were unfamiliar with its details and potential impact on the bus service. One common theme that appeared amongst the voters, whether they voted for or against the plan, is that they all believe that having light rail in Kansas City would be a benefit to the community.

After watching the video presentation, each of the panelists shared their thoughts about the options and the challenges that Kansas City needs to deal with in making light rail transit a reality. The cost and financing for the plan, the potential for starting something on the local level prior to seeking federal funds and the role that a citizen advocacy group like the **RTA** needs to play in this matter were some of the issues that were discussed amongst the panelists.

The people in attendance, comprised equally of **RTA** members and non-members, were also able to make comments and ask questions. This segment of the meeting was so engaging that people stayed well beyond the scheduled time. One attendee, a non-**RTA** member, heard about the meeting and decided to come to see what she could learn. In an email note to a Board member the next day, she wrote "Thanks for the conversation last evening, and the opportunity to hear an interesting panel discussion regarding the difficulty of bringing light rail/alternative transit into KC region. One probably learned more in that single hour about the complexities of such an effort than six/ten hours of reading would have yielded."

## RTA Annual Meeting Yields New Members to the Board of Directors

At the Annual Meeting on May 16, the membership elected several new members to the Board of Directors. In addition to the reappointment of six current Board members, five new Board members were approved. Among the new Board members are the Honorable Mark Funkhouser, Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri; Tom Hoenig, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City; Cynthia "Kitty" McCoy, President of Enterprise Control Systems; Ted Rieck, Vice President with TranSystems, Inc.; and the Honorable Mike Sanders, Jackson County Executive.

We are very pleased to have these very capable community leaders join the Board as we continue to work to improve the status of public transit in our region.

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