



Transportation Outlook 2040

Citizen Discussions: Transportation Outlook

October 16, 2008

Kansas City Public Library, Plaza Branch
4801 Main St.
Kansas City, MO 64112

WARM-UP QUESTIONS

JH: We are delighted to have you here with us this evening and to hear the input you will share with us this evening. You will be answering questions and activities that will help us understand your views.

JH: How do you get to the places you need to go?

S: Walk, bike, car (overwhelming), walk in transit, depends on location, bus

JH: Where other people need to go, last night someone came up with rickshaws. We heard many different methods that you use and to think outside of this, what has to be in place to use your method of transportation?

S: Infrastructure, roads, bridges, traffic signals – we don't have light rail yet.

JH: What else has to be in place?

S: Sidewalks and parking lots

S: Bike trails

S: The MAX – don't ride anything else. It is easier. Ease of information like online.

JH: We are pointing to infrastructure to use these modes of transportation. We need to look at the bigger infrastructure system to transport goods and people.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

DISCUSSION

JH: As we begin the last section of the evening together, remember we are trying to get at the values and needs of the region to answer these questions.

The first question we have is considered that half a million people will be added to the region. What do you think local governments will need to do to accommodate those people in the region? What will need to be put in place?

S: Better cooperation between governmental entities, and the people as a whole have to get into a public transit mindset – that they can get there using public transit. A mechanism to develop something [that moves the] public around.

S: No road expansion projects; encourage density to go in areas that have the infrastructure possible. No tax credit or matching funds for any new road or infrastructure beyond a certain area to discourage that need.

S: Collective mentality of all the different communities

S: I lived in the greatest part of the metro, and I don't know why I moved out.

S: I prefer looking at the garden high-rises done in Europe and the train out side of Paris and there were some very large buildings. Mixed-use development and an incredible amount of space around. Save some money by putting the electric in the high-rise units. I think we could circle KC with that type of situation. Next to put the half-million inside these parameters and take care of that part of infrastructure.

S: Land use policies that encourage infill policies and discourage outside development

S: Public transportation is great in theory but you have to make it cool. Light rail and streetcars

JH: This question is just about the residents.

S: Can't get people to move into an area without being secure from crime and transportation

S: Moved in town and liked what was there, but constant fight against commercial and high-rise venture. If you do some things with infill, but [you have to] match the existing zoning and structure. You will get more cooperation if you don't have people constantly battling for their neighborhood.

JH: The forecast is 250,000 more jobs for the region. What does local government need to put into place?

S: Better schools

S: Very good regional policies to concentrate local jobs where there is public transit and closer to their homes so they can bike to them.

S: I don't think we have room for that many McDonald's.

S: Encourage mixed-use developments so they can live close to their jobs.

S: Discourage urban development areas and encourage sidewalks – so we can get them repaired and built and traffic signals to encourage walking

S: Major bike routes

S: So much competition with each other and everyone looking for tax abasements. We have to start thinking regionally. We need to stop abusing the TIFFS and incentivize the downtown areas.

JH: How will new jobs and residents impact the region?

S: More rehab of existing structures.

S: Increase property values and supply and demand. We have a lot of people who are doing historical restoration; that will be obsolete in the future.

S: Biggest business presence we have down there – sport people KLH – City Market – consistent with the structure that is already there. Residents and businesses in the area [need to] compliment the area. Transit and everything that I have read, they want to promote foot traffic. You can't plop a 25-story building in the City Market and make it look aesthetic.

S: If we are expecting this number of people and jobs, we are going to have to have repair ship down [here]. People need to consider what we want to do, or people will have to continue spreading out.

S: Energy [use]; we have to consider these things.

JH: Think about the entire region and the communities here. Where in the region you would like the infrastructure to be added? Add further than your exercise? Geographically and spatially ...

S: How far north do we want to go? Can't go farther west or east. South is where they are building a new shipping hub and the Honeywell Plant. We need space to expand.

S: A lot of the neighborhoods, and areas where the buildings are a little more dense, we would probably have to work 50 years to infill all the empty spaces, but they are not in the attractive areas. Infill all the empty spaces.

JH: Anywhere not to do it?

S: Ordinances should reflect the values of KC and keep the costs lower

S: [Outside] 435 and streams that you want to be careful not to infill. We need to focus on the infill development before we start investing in more and more.

S: These are wonderful comments making tonight, but understand the value system and the south KC and Missouri, the open spaces out there and affordable residential out there. We can have population around there – and flooding everything in the downtown area concerns me. I have lived in NY and that is a huge vacuum – I don't think we should vaporize the area.

S: We talked about this earlier, when you have suburban development, the infrastructure roads and everything, everyone pays for that. That suburban development is expensive for everyone – not just them.

S: Amazing what they have been doing on the Blue River to build, but I don't see what is going on on each side, and there is a huge area that can be developed along Brush Creek. I don't see anything [about] the city government that is working toward developing that.

S: Those of us who don't want development in inner city and those of us who can find development opportunities, I think getting back, I think we should consider those of infrastructure that do not require trunk sewers. Focus development on areas that already have trunk sewer systems and infrastructure.

S: We have people say we don't want competition between states, and then don't want anyone to pass out of the 435 loop. JOCO is one of the greatest in the country and we can't take away from that. We can't do both.

S: The 435 loop, what I think, we shouldn't be paying for sprawl. Our tax funds, if they want to go out there, but don't use tax dollars on the infrastructure.

S: "Community of Reason." He mentioned that KC itself was facing a billion dollars of sewage repair – if you do that, you will discourage people to move here. Adding that much of expense, it will not happen. Johnson County is a great place to live, but I grew up in this city. The bottom line is the Plaza, Westport – but the jobs will go where middle class people go for comfort and security. More [bus] passes – 90 percent of people are going to drive their cars.

JH: What is your vision in how the people will live in the region in 2040? Closer to their homes, anything that you want to add to relying on cars to get around?

S: We should want people to be able to live in quality urban environments to support their needs. Cultural and spiritual opportunities. Part of getting those opportunities is [having people located] near the areas. Discourage dispersing.

S: Reality is people will probably be shopping more online. Jobs don't have to be physically near the people because of high-end and otherwise. They will have connections to the Internet. No reason to assume that the last 50 years and the next 50 years will be the same for living.

S: People want quality safe places to live where they want. What is wrong with the suburbs?

JH: What is the vision?

S: [When you have] a lot of people in concentrated [an] area, you have a sense of peace but conflict. When these areas are designed, the concept of privacy – build in a hurry [with] no regard of what is going on. Everyone can look in others' windows. [Overbuilding forces us to build green space rather than conserve it.] If we were to use the infill areas, there are a lot of areas you can't infill because of current code. The code is going to have to be multiple codes to fit the area.

S: I don't want to live in a nice home knowing that east of Troost people will live in houses with leaking roofs.

JH: Considering the natural environment that is part of and surrounding our communities, how should we take into consideration air, water, climate, etc.?

S: Elephant in the living room is climate change. Anything we do to reduce our need for transportation and energy to preserve the natural environment – concerned with maintaining the global climate. Want to focus on big picture that supports the human population.

S: [Because] the sewers need to be repaired, that needs to be a top priority, and people need to get involved on how they pay for [their waste to] not go into the river. The river is a beautiful place. Sewers – methane issues and nutrient reclamation.

S: Water runoff – like the 1977 flood – the bottom line is more water and less concrete — that is something to take into consideration. MARC is concerned with KC. Let the world take care of [itself].

S: Energy is very important, and the next issue is water quality and management.

S: Transportation now – we need to think of pedestrian transportation and for our environment to make it better.

S: Rain barrel – tax incentive for rain barrel and people should get free rain barrel from the city. The carbon footprint is to reuse an existing structure.

JH: How concerned about emissions cars, trucks and other vehicles. Or are you concerned at all?

S: I guess I don't know how much any one organization can do to bridge the gap between people who drive everywhere and don't consider the option, and those who use a bike and don't drive to transport themselves within the city without using a car. I have friends that are 40 who are afraid of driving a car and who still get around through all seasons without driving a car. It's pretty obvious if you don't use a car, you can see.

S: With all the new people and industries, whether we want to or not, we don't want them all spending on the cars because of climate change and economic [factors]. Change the people's mindset, "what am I going to do to contribute to the world environment?"

JH: What modes of transportation would you like to use with more ease and convenience in your community?

S: Buses that really work. The MAX and Troost buses are frequent. Be nicer if [they ran] later and cross buses (*Editor's note: the participant was referring to buses that run east-west to connect the two lines*).

S: 22-hour service on the main bus lines

S: Germany, train instead of buses – I would like to see trains come back – [or there should be] one lane of traffic for scooters, buses and slow traffic

S: I would like more options in transportation. When I think of Europe and then Olathe, Blue Springs and having a train or bus go there, part of the region and not part of city – they have mass transit overseas to go there. More walking and biking lanes and boulevards – slow traffic down in general.

JH: Any last comments on modes? Are you willing to pay for infrastructure?

S: Light rail

JH: Any mode of transportation?

S: A lot more walking and biking if we have closer communities – but think that there will still be the most convenient mode of transportation

S: From Boston with light rail – when moved here, it didn't feel like a city except the buses. Not having light rail, I don't know how people do it. I drove my first car in this city.

JH: Willing to pay more?

S: Bikes are really cheap and easy for the infrastructure and easy to pass. More circulation routes.

S: ... Anything we can do to reduce the modes of transportation – especially the obvious – changes that we have to get inside people's heads so they don't feel they have to travel so far.

S: One of the things, [like] a lot of the comments here [have said], we are going to have to make some changes. The economics or the laws are going to have to change. Germany nationalized the trains – we are going to have to nationalize heavy rail if you want to use in the cities. We are going to have to take from the cities – we are just going to have to take them and can't wait until everyone gets [on board].

S: I don't see why we can't re-divide the transportation dollars. Instead of spending millions of dollars on parking spaces and roadways, use [the money] for alternative modes.

S: One of the biggest problems is that a lot of people moving around – gas, traffic flow, for example, a burger flipper at McDonald's, everywhere – [there's] no sense to have them drive farther to get job when they can switch with someone closer and then they can bike and walk and bus to their job.

S: Optimal if we lived, worked and shopped within 5-mile radius and then gas prices should reflect the real road costs. Cities and counties should not absorb that costs.

JH: Identify transportation projects undertaken that are a waste of money or projects that would reduce spending?

S: Main bus line on Main Street, study [said it] should go on Troost – when the rail system comes it will be torn down and waste of money

S: Grandview Triangle – building more roads to take care of congestion is like loosening belt to eat more.

S: Germany is about the size of Kansas, their density is much more than ours, but [they] have a train system

S: Any project that makes an urban road into an interstate road is a waste of money – 71 being upgraded

JH: Examples on reducing spending on transportation?

S: Bike path owned by KC [Area] Transit Authority, the businesses have improved, college kids used – the right-of-way could be converted to the same thing

S: I drive all over the city in my car, but that thing has saved me time, money – those projects from a business angle, made my job easier – Grandview and 71 projects

S: Creating something that will allow people to carpool

S: Sidewalks that radiate out and a half-mile in every direction that will allow people to go to grocery stores, etc.

JH: Does a person with a different race than you, living in your community, have equal access to your community's transportation system?

S: Our region lends more to whites, and blacks moving into neighborhoods suffered the same problems. Why are we not holding the SMART meetings into the other parts of town where the minorities face? Need to reach out and find ways to get to those communities? Maybe in a black church.

S: 30 percent of people in Missouri don't have driver's licenses and 10 percent don't have cars. By only building roads, we are only serving people who have cars, and we are not serving the ones who don't have cars.

S: 99 percent of the population have cars – middle class people drive and will continue to drive. [We have to figure out ways to de-incentivize driving, such as increasing the taxes on gas, etc. We need to create mixed-use areas that allow people to live, shop, have fun and eat all in the same area to decrease the distances we need to drive in order to get to those things. Right now we're all over the map. People from a different race don't have access to any of those opportunities in their communities right now.]

S: I want to shift the mindset – the important thing is not access to transportation but access to opportunities – cultural and spiritual and other things. The focus needs to be whether we need to provide

access to other opportunities. The best things are happening farther and farther out from the region and the dispersal of these is the major concern if we are talking about equitable access to opportunities.

JH: Any other things?

S: I don't think access is based on race but geographical – if you live downtown, you have access to a bus – geography as opposed to ethnicity.

S: I can't tell you what doesn't exist east of Troost. [Listen] to black individuals – they don't have buses [all] the time and [have to worry about] the safety of their women going from one place to another. They can't take buses to entertainment because the buses quit running. I couldn't get a bus back from the airport at 8 p.m. on Sunday night. Have to pay \$45 or have someone to call. Majority of people east of Troost are at my income or lower. You should ask them.

JH: Should businesses that use the transportation system frequently or impact the condition more than the average user?

S: I would like to say that the taxes on gas do not take care of road repairs. Those who don't have cars pay the taxes but don't get to use the roads.

S: Issue of who pays: benefits received [and taxes paid] by businesses should be proportionate their [use of the] transportation system. Even if we don't expand the system one mile, we have been using [a] transportation system beyond our needs. If we were paying for the system we have, we would be paying 3–4 percent [more each] year. [We're] pushing off [the costs of expanding the transportation system] onto future generations.

S: Whoever uses the roads should be the one to pay, and [the payments should be a] reflection of the costs of the roads.

S: Indirectly, we pay for the roads whether we use [them] or not – everything we get is trucked on the roads, so everyone uses them whether we think [we do] or not.

S: If I want to take the time to get on the bus and go out to the stadium, it will cost me \$1.25 – the moment they have an event, the bus varies every time and the locations and costs become exorbitant. It is unfair. If you want to have a private charter, they are using publicly funded bus service regardless of what it is.

JH: Are the costs for the transportation system distributed equally among the communities in our region?

S: We are paying what we have to pay to get where we have to go

S: There are more streets in the city, and most people cross through them going to suburbs, and they don't have to pay.

S: The costs are not even distributed because they are from federal tax dollars. But use of the roads is not [paid] evenly.

S: Gas prices vary from KS to MO for a reason because of the roads.

S: Seamless transportation throughout the region – I would point to Johnson County not holding or adequately funding a transit system and a share of the transportation costs and jobs

S: We had regionalism conversations years ago, and we got away from [that]. We have to think about some way for the region to think about it.