

## **Transit Action Network**

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### **KC City Council Transit Forum 2011**

#### **The Questions**

**1. The Council recently passed an ordinance (100951) to restore funding to transit from the ½ cent transportation fund.**

**Do you support continued city funding of public transit as an essential city service? Please explain the reason for your position.**

**2. How would you change land use, parking, and other policies to make Kansas City more transit friendly?**

**3. The City and KCATA will evaluate a proposed downtown streetcar (initially River Market to Crown Center) through a formal Alternatives Analysis study within the next year. If it qualifies for federal funding, Kansas City will need to find money for the city's share of the capital cost and for operations.**

**a. If you support the proposed downtown streetcar, how should it be funded? Please explain your funding choice.**

**b. If you do not support the proposed downtown streetcar, please explain why.**

**4. How would you improve and expand transit service in the Northland and other outlying areas of Kansas City without decreasing transit service in the urban core?**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> District**

##### **Dick Davis**

1. Yes. Public transit must remain a priority public service for the city of Kansas City. I served as the General Manager of the KCATA for 23 years, advocating continued city funding. I retain that strong commitment.

2. My major concern is the number of bus stops in my district that are on streets with no curbs and gutters or sidewalks. I will strongly encourage the allocation of resources to improve this.

3. I support the downtown streetcar and regret that it will not cover a greater distance. The alignment for the light rail in the proposal defeated in the early 2000's election is the one that I would prefer. Nevertheless, if we have the opportunity to start a fixed rail system – either light rail or streetcar – I will be a strong advocate.

I would hope that the Jackson County initiative would include a county wide sales tax increase. Some of that should be used as the local match for the

streetcar.

4. Over the last 20 years the KCATA has done a fine job in improving its efficiency by replacing large buses with smaller ones and Metroflex vehicles. I think this program should be continued and some of the savings used to expand Metroflex services in the Northland.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> District**

### **Aaron Benefield**

1. Kansas City's public transit system is vital for many of our residents and represents their only mode of transportation to and from the Northland to jobs and entertainment venues throughout the city. As such, I support public transportation

2. Transit options are important. In the Northland, many of our bus stops lack any infrastructure to support effective use. Often, people are standing on unpaved shoulders and are exposed to inclement weather, or are alone in busy intersections. I will work with businesses and local leaders within the Northland to help ensure adequate public parking, covered bus stands, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities are available for current and future users of public transit.

3. I support the streetcar concept; however, multimodal transportation must be integrated into the city's overall transportation plan. Funding for the streetcar should come predominantly from private funds, state or federal transportation dollars or a dedicated tax supported by voters. I do not support using general fund resources for this project.

4. I believe the KCATA is doing its best to maximize its limited resources. If cost-effective, I would support smaller buses and more frequent trips to and from the Northland to get people to and from their jobs. Safe and convenient services are key to increasing ridership and public support of transit initiatives.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> District At-Large**

### **Ed Ford**

1. The KCATA is a part of the everyday lives of our citizens that rely on it for transportation. I was the lead sponsor of this ordinance because I believe that we should be true to our voters that approved the transportation tax renewal.

2. Currently, I serve on the Parking and Way Finding Committee that is specifically looking at these issues in the Downtown area. Our experiences in streamlining the transportation needs in this area will serve us well in other parts of our city.

3. I support the downtown streetcar system and have had conversations with the Downtown Council about using assessments from the Community Improvement District or creating a Transportation Improvement District for the local matching funds necessary for a federal grant.

4. I am excited about the next MAX line, which is planned for N Oak Trafficway. In order for a stronger northland transportation network, communities outside of the KCMO city limits will have to pay their share of the network that their residents benefit from.

Respectfully submitted by Councilman Ed Ford, 2<sup>nd</sup> district at-large and former KCATA board member and Co-chair of the two successful campaigns for bus transit improvements and its renewal.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> District At-Large**

#### **Melba Curls**

1. Yes, I do support the continued funding of the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority through the Transportation Fund. As the current City Councilwoman representing the 3<sup>rd</sup> District At-Large, I co-sponsored Ordinance #100951, which directs the City Manager to incrementally increase current appropriations to KCATA beginning May 1, 2011. Our public transit system is one of the most reliable sources of travel in Kansas City, and it is essential that its funding remain at levels that allow the city to continue to provide this valuable service. Public transportation is especially critical for many of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District residents, and I will continue to speak out in favor of supporting and funding our transit system.

2. I would have regular discussions with authorities who are responsible for policies that impact parking, land use, and other issues that relate to transportation throughout Kansas City. It is essential to get input from neighborhood associations, city staff, transit authority members, and other community leaders in order to identify solutions that will help Kansas City be a more transit-friendly community. I would also look for more opportunities to have Park-and-Ride options throughout the city to increase ridership and to ease parking pressure in downtown Kansas City.

3. I am in favor of the downtown streetcar initiative. However, with the present national economy recovery, questions about availability of transit funding, and the Earnings Tax vote looming, I would hesitate to implement additional mandates from the City. I would continue dialog with Federal and State officials, or look at private funding options for this initiative.

4. There has been reduction of services in some areas of the City because of reduced ridership. I would need to see additional data to justify expanding services to other parts of the City. I would also look at starting a few initial "Park and Ride" pilots to determine the viability of expanded Northland and suburban transit services.

### **4<sup>th</sup> District**

#### **Jan Marcason**

I am a very strong supporter of transit and the ATA. I have worked hard as a member of the city council and as an officer of the Mid America Regional Council to ensure adequate public transportation options for our residents.

1. Yes, I support continued city funding of public transit and voted for ordinance 100951. I am currently the Transportation Commissioner for the downtown area and am working very hard to ensure that public transit is available for those who rely on this to get to work and other needs.
2. I support many portions of the new development code that reduce the number of required parking spaces, provide street diets to reduce traffic, and ensure bike and pedestrian lanes for our urban core.
3. I am a strong supporter of the downtown streetcar proposal. We have studied this issue for a long time and it is time to work toward implementation of a starter line. We are evaluating all possible funding sources, but a transportation district that would finance the plan with the economic benefits of a streetcar line seems like a good possibility.
4. I am confident that data would substantiate that the majority of riders live in the central city. We need to use ridership data to plan the routes for the ATA so that those who most rely on this service are accommodated. Since the district I represent is entirely in the south part of Kansas City, I have somewhat of a bias to ensure this service to my constituents. However, I understand that as jobs are more available in the northland, residents living south of the river require transportation to places of employment.

## **5<sup>th</sup> District**

### **Michael E. Brooks**

1. I do support the funding of the area transit authority. There are too many citizens that depend on the bus service for it not to be fully funded. I supported the effort through my work with MORE2. I will continue to fight for the proper use of those funds.
2. I will depend on input from organizations like yours, and working with city staff, to come up with the best plan for our city.
3. I do support the idea and would work with ATA and city staff to find funding options.
4. ATA would have to present the proposal, I would support it and hope the additional funding just approved would aid in the accomplishment of the plan.

### **Ken Bacchus**

1. Yes. There are many people who look to public transportation because they have no alternative (auto). In addition, the fewer cars that are driven, the less the carbon footprint on our environment (and on and on). Gasoline costs combined with good urban and inner ring decisions could be the catalysts for more denser development and thus more efficient public transportation.
2. Land use - we should encourage more dense development patterns in areas located within a four to five block radius of MAX (and other future) transit stops. Parking - in suburban areas should be encouraged at major

transit stops and more limited and shared (around the clock) entertainment/shopping and downtown areas. These initiatives will not occur overnight, but rather incrementally as we develop better transit alternatives.

3. Yes I support. We could explore all of the alternatives with all stakeholders (Jackson County Govt - NID or similar District). These initial projects could be the catalyst for other lines as it become more trendy and friendly to the public.

4. As has been completed on Main (Waldo) and Troost, similar Max type routes should be designed along Independence Ave, Prospect Avenue and east to west streets (27th and 39th). Similarly, routes such as North Oak and Vivion Road should also be considered. We must establish ridership in order to take transit to the next level! I have been involved in public transit in some way for way too many years to give up now!

## **5<sup>th</sup> District At-Large**

### **Cindy Circo**

1. I support public transit because not only is it the only mode of transportation for many of our citizens but with the increase in gas prices it has become the preferred choice of many others. Transportation creates economic opportunities and these opportunities create livable communities.

2. Yes, with community input.

3. If the street cars are going to sustainable there is going to have to be a riders fair. For startup and construction a transportation district could be established for the corridor.

4. Don't forget the far East side of Kansas City that has little to no service. We need to create transit hubs that are attractive and encourage ridership. We also need to design our suburbs to be walkable communities. If I need to get in my car to drive to the bus stop most likely I will keep on driving to my destination.

## **6<sup>th</sup> District**

### **John Sharp**

1. I co-sponsored Ordinance 100951 and vocally supported it during Council debate. Adequate public transit is an essential service for a healthy and growing city that is able to attract and retain upwardly mobile young people. Because we have not adequately funded public transit to date, many people face daunting challenges just getting to work every day. With the new ozone standards that likely will soon be made even more stringent, it is essential that Kansas City take significant steps immediately to reduce air pollution or we will face federal restrictions on economic development as a non-attainment area.

2. The Mid America Regional Council missed an opportunity to aggressively promote more sensible economic development by not

adopting a strong adaptive growth model as part of its 2040 plan. However, the modified plan that was adopted at least encourages infill development and the clustering of development along transportation corridors. Kansas City is finally looking at other methods of transportation for employees and customers of new businesses instead of focusing strictly on accommodating private motor vehicle use when approving new development plans.

3. I strongly support the proposed downtown centered streetcar system and voted to approve city funding for the local match for the alternatives analysis. I remain hopeful that even with a much more conservative Congress that we may be able to secure small start or new start federal funding for most of the capital costs for this system. I think creation of a Transportation Development District that could levy a sales and/or property tax is the best option for funding operation and maintenance expenses not covered by fares, as well as possibly the local share of capital costs.

4. As the economy recovers, the Council needs to seriously consider asking voters to approve the additional one-eighth cent sales tax for public transit that is currently authorized subject to voter approval. Without additional funding, there is no way to expand public transit routes to more outlying areas without reducing service in the urban core. Such expanded service could utilize smaller buses in many areas to reduce additional costs. The higher the price of gas goes, the better our chances of success at the polls.

## **6<sup>th</sup> District At-Large**

### **Scott Taylor**

1. Absolutely! I completely agree with the Council's decision to provide for this funding. I believe the voters want this money to go to public transportation and not to be diverted.

One of my priorities is jobs. Public transportation is vital to keep our citizens working. We need to ensure that our citizens can get to their jobs.

2. By utilizing and investing in public transportation we could change our City's landscape for the better. Instead of using our scarce resources to build parking lots and garages for our infrastructure we could invest in more green spaces. We should look at "greener" solutions.

3. I am pleased this study is being pursued. I have met and discussed this with TranSystems. If it qualifies for federal funding I will be active in looking for ways to find the resources. Because our resources are scarce, we should explore ways to partner with Jackson County on funding.

4. This is a question of resources. We may need to look at ways to pull / share resources with the County for the outlying areas. The ATA has also implemented some creative ways to help expedite services like the Max on Troost.

**Tracy Ward**

1. Yes, I support continued city funding of public transit and I would like to see the city put a halt to keeping some of those funds, instead of using them in other areas of the budget. Public transit is an essential service for the poor and lower middle class for both getting to work and shopping. I would propose a city run study on where the jobs are in Kansas City and where the likely job candidates reside. I'd establish routes between these areas that correspond with job hours.
2. I do not believe that our streets are not as congested as compared to other large Midwestern cities.
3. I do not support a downtown streetcar because I believe these types of gimmicks do not serve the bus riding public any more effectively than traditional public transit.
4. I think the ATA needs to receive all of the funding that has been outlined for it, which would increase the funds the ATA can use for improving service. I also believe that a study should be done to find out where buses are needed most.