

1711 W. 19th Terrace
Lawrence, Kansas
July 31, 2008

RECEIVED

AUG 04 2008

CITY MANAGERS OFFICE
LAWRENCE, KS

Mr. Michael Deever
Lawrence City Commission
City Hall, PO Box 708
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Dear Mr Deever:

I have been riding the "T" a lot lately. In fact, I am walking, bicycling, or riding the bus everywhere I go for several weeks until my wife returns from grandbaby duty in North Carolina.

The "T" provides a vital service to our citizens, and the availability of a decent public transit system was one of the factors that attracted us to Lawrence when we retired and moved here last year. We had experienced the comprehensive bus services in Seattle and believe that a city without adequate public transportation is just not worth living in.

For many Lawrence residents who probably don't have the resources to write letters to the city commission, the "T" is their only transportation option for getting to work, shopping, and other excursions. So, this letter is for them. Yes, I could probably survive without the "T" but I'm not certain they could.

I encourage you to consider developing a comprehensive plan to fund and improve public transportation in Lawrence. Instead of devoting three-fifths of the proposed funding to infrastructure and two-fifths to the "T", we should reverse the allocation or split the funds. Other ideas for funding the "T" include adequate enforcement of speed limits and stop light infractions. We could save thousands by stopping idling police and city vehicles and turning down the thermostat in the overheated library.

And what happened to the plan to merge the "T" and KU bus service? Other locales have done this. It makes sense and could save money.

Long-term savings could come from using hybrid or biodiesel vehicles, or hydrogen-powered buses like they have in Europe (with hydrogen made from wind-powered electricity). The city should explore grants for funding innovative public transportation vehicles. I'll bet the Dept. of Energy has something available.

I urge you to renew your enthusiasm for the "T" and develop a plan to save our public transportation system.

Sincerely,



George M. Brenner

*Good transportation
for workers is good
for businesses too.
Save the "T"!
g*



The First Presbyterian Church

2415 Clinton Parkway, Lawrence, Kansas 66047-3723
(785) 843-4171 • fax (785) 843-4278 • www.firstpreslawrence.org

PASTORAL STAFF

The Rev. Kent Winters-Hazelton
Pastor

The Rev. Phyllis Stutzman
Associate Pastor

The Rev. Carolynn Winters-Hazelton
Parish Associate

STAFF

David Seffens
Financial Administrator

Linda Bridges
Office Administrator

Katie Roberts
Office Assistant

The Rev. Thad Holcombe
Campus Pastor

Jennifer Allen
Preschool Director

Gilbert Osburn
Sexton

MUSIC STAFF

Tracy Resseguie
Director of Music

Sharee Thompson
Organist

Daniel Ogle
Bell Choir Director and
Children's Choir Director

August 1, 2008

City Manager David Corliss
City Hall
Box 708
Lawrence, KS 66044

Dear Mr. Corliss,

As pastors of several Lawrence churches, we wish to express our deep concern over the proposed city cuts for the Bert Nash Homeless Outreach Team. The disproportionate cut in this program in relationship to other programs in the city's budget is alarming. We believe that it is critical for the homeless to have more, not less case-worker contact, monitoring their situation, and providing guidance to them and to members of the community in how to respond and assist them. At a time when many of our residents are feeling the impact of the economic downturn, there is sure to be an increase of people with housing needs, requiring the services of a caseworker and seeking help from our community's churches. The proposed cut to this program will result directly in an increase of people without access to adequate housing.

This program was the highest priority of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness 2005 and has been very successful helping people move from despair to hope as they face difficult housing options. In the past quarter alone, the Homeless Outreach Team has housed 24 homeless individuals and 10 homeless families. An additional 6 individuals and families are now in transitional housing, 11 are on the waitlist for subsidized housing, 15 are employed, 32 are receiving mental health care, and 8 have received alcohol or drug treatment services. We are aware that the Outreach Team members have provided the Commission with extensive reports on the effectiveness of their work. We strongly encourage you to review those reports before taking any final action on the proposed cuts.

Our informal group of Downtown Clergy has been looking for ways to use resources made available by our congregation in the most effective manner to assist those who critical housing needs. As the result of a thorough search of community based social services, we have partnered with the Homeless Outreach Team for our Lawrence Ministerial Emergency Fund.

We have found this program invaluable in its service to the needy in our community. In our work, we have neither the training nor the time to do necessary intake assessment or case management for the people who come to our churches needing assistance. The Homeless Outreach Team does have the background. We are impressed as well with their connection to the other programs in our community, to help coordinate efforts and to ensure that there is no duplication of efforts.

A drastic cut in funding for the Homeless Outreach Team will not only affect the direct work of the team; this cut will also hinder the efforts of our churches to use our financial resources in the most effective way. Please reconsider the proposed budget cuts to the Bert Nash Homeless Outreach Team for the 2009 city budget.

Respectfully,

Randy Beeman, First Christian Church

Tom Brady, First United Methodist Church

Maria Campbell, Central United Methodist Church

Kara Edison, First United Methodist Church

Joanna Harader, Peace Mennonite Church

Thad Holcomb, Ecumenical Christian Ministry

Peter Luckey, Plymouth Congregational Church

Fr. John Schmeidler, St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

Gary Teske, Trinity Lutheran Church

Delmar A. White, Ninth Street Baptist

Bill Woodward, Westside Presbyterian Church

Kent Winters-Hazelton, First Presbyterian Church, Facilitator



League of Women Voters Lawrence-Douglas County

P.O. Box 1072 • Lawrence, Kansas 66044-1072

July 31, 2008

Dear Mayor and City Commissioners:

It's been stated in other venues that public transit already moves hundreds of Lawrence residents around our city every day, including many of our most vulnerable citizens. The "T" provides transportation for people with disabilities, seniors, minors, and others without access to vehicles, not to mention many residents who use the service as a way to save on gasoline or lessen their carbon footprint as they travel around town. Since it began delivering services in 2001, the "T" has increased ridership in every year but 2007 (when fares were raised twice). Even with this decrease, last year, the "T" provided 232,000 more one-way trips on its fixed routes than it did in 2001.

A good public transit system has been shown to be an important element in business attraction, and other communities regard their transportation systems as a tool for economic development. Obviously, public transit is good for employers, moving residents who otherwise would have no reliable way to get to work across town. But other studies have shown that public transportation is also good for local retail business, getting residents without other modes of transport to shopping areas. Public transportation helps reduce traffic congestion, reducing travel time and cost for everyone. It reduces the need to repair and expand of the road network. It saves energy. It helps reduce auto emissions, improving air quality. And it's significantly safer than travel in single-passenger vehicles. Our bus system may not be the most convenient yet, and it may not be a transportation option that everyone chooses to use yet, but it is an essential public service that a growing city like Lawrence cannot do without.

It's time Lawrence accepted the "T" as a permanent part of our City's infrastructure, not some frill whose existence we can question or put to special vote every time there's a budget shortfall. Our bus system is as important as, and has a bigger impact and a broader reach than, many items in the city budget which are not funded with by special sales tax. The City Commission is charged with making tough decisions that will benefit Lawrence now and in the future. That's what we pay them to do. Instead of scrapping the "T", or cutting service to the bone, or singling out this indispensable city service for a referendum, the Commission should actually make the progressive choice to invest in our public transit system. In this case, the right decision about our bus system will take courage and vision from the Commission, but it is an obvious one: save our bus system and fund it adequately now, and start planning to expand the service in the future.

Sincerely,

Carrie Lindsey
President, LWV L-DC
785-766-8561

**2008-2009
Officers and
Board of Directors**

President

Carrie Lindsey

Vice-President

Milton Scott

Treasurer

Gary Hale

Secretary

Marjorie Cole

Board of Directors

James Dunn

Lee Ann Duvers

Brooke Goc

Kay Hale

Aline Hoey

Caleb Morse

Elinor Tourtellot

Mary Lou Wright

Web sites

LOCAL:

<http://lawrenceleague.com/>

STATE:

www.lwvk.org

NATIONAL:

www.lwv.org

Email:

league@sunflower.com



League of Women Voters Lawrence-Douglas County
P.O. Box 1072 • Lawrence, Kansas 66044-1072

Sources

"T" ridership increases: <http://www.lawrenceks.org/transit/about.shtml>

Business attraction: Calgary:

http://www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/pdf/Business_Survey_Summary_Dec_2004.pdf

Bakersfield:

<http://www.kedc.com/page.asp/csasp/DepartmentID.16/cs/SectionID.5/cs/PageID.50/csasp.html>

Economic development around transit routes:

http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/economic_importance.cfm

Traffic congestion:

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-09-18-congestion_N.htm

<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440ddcbeeb501010a0/?vgnextoid=05dc5aa265b32010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>

<http://vaperforms.virginia.gov/i-trafficCongestion.php>

<http://www.publictransportation.org/reports/asp/congestion.asp>

Road repair and expansion, emissions reduction, etc:

<http://www.publictransportation.org/reports/asp/congestion.asp>

Safety: http://www.lightrailnow.org/facts/fa_00015.htm

<http://www.car-seat.org/showthread.php?t=45828>

General summary of benefits:

<http://www.gocmrta.com/content/pdf/Benefits%20of%20Public%20Transportation.pdf>

Bobbie Walthall

From: Lisa Patterson
Sent: Friday, August 01, 2008 11:18 AM
To: David L. Corliss; Cynthia Boecker; Diane Stoddard; Jonathan Douglass; Bobbie Walthall
Subject: Fw: To the City Commissioners: Lawrence Transit system funding

----- Original Message -----

From: Caroline Dieterle <caroline-dieterle@uiowa.edu>
To: Lisa Patterson
Cc: agardner@ljworld.com <agardner@ljworld.com>
Sent: Fri Aug 01 11:09:32 2008
Subject: To the City Commissioners: Lawrence Transit system funding

Mayor Dever and City Commissioners:

According to the July 23 issue of the Lawrence Journal World, there is a looming possibility of the Commission shortsightedly consigning the fate of the Transit system to a sales tax vote.

I live in Iowa City. We lost our transit system here in the early '70's due to funding difficulties and for a year or two had no public transit. It was quickly realized that this was not an acceptable situation, and that public transit - like water, sewer, police and fire services - is a civic necessity that should be supported reliably out of the General Fund (property taxes) for the common good of the populace.

Let me guess: the pro-sales tax vote persons on the Commission are basically saying, "If you care about the buses, work hard to pass the sales tax!"

This stance ignores the inherently regressive nature of the sales tax, for which many voters will rightly oppose it, and is the metaphoric equivalent of putting a gun to a hostage's head and saying 'do as we say - or we will kill our hostage!'

What is your Plan B if the sales tax vote fails? Let me guess again:

issuing vouchers! Has anyone in the Lawrence City finance dept. been given the task of figuring out what the probable cost of those vouchers would be? A quick check of the Lawrence Transit system's web site indicates that annual ridership for FY 2007 was approximately 445,000, regular transit + paratransit; according to the recent Transit survey, slightly over 50% of the riders use the Transit system to get to work; about 60,000 of the riders need paratransit (T Lift). If vouchers are issued on the basis of necessity, a lot of them are going to be needed. Especially if the vouchers are for taxi rides. Staffing and gassing taxicabs is expensive too. Realistically, the cost of vouchers must also include the costs of paperwork and staff time required to determine who deserves vouchers.

The saddest part of the Lawrence situation is that Lawrence is supposed to be a progressive town, on a par with Iowa City. Officials in the Iowa City finance dept. were surprised to hear that Lawrence was considering funding its transit system with a sales tax. Iowa City's system is supported by property taxes (about 50%), fare revenues, and a federal grant. Has Lawrence applied for a federal grant?

Iowa City has a population of approximately 67,000 residents; this compares to Lawrence's approximately 85,000. Iowa City transit ridership in FY '07 was 1.7 million. The free shuttle running in and out of the campus area from student housing neighborhoods has been a ridership success and has kept countless parking spaces free downtown and on campus. Reduced fares greatly increase ridership; although this makes the transit system more dependent on public funding, it provides economies elsewhere by saving fuel and reducing traffic congestion/motor idling pollution, parking problems, and wear and tear on streets.

Another guess: the Lawrence City Commission and local business interests are pushing hard towards the mirage of 'economic development to increase the tax base and decrease property taxes'.

The reality is that economic expansion brings with it correspondingly increased City costs, so that property taxes will never decrease. But since this will not deter those wishing to attract growth, growth will occur. Where is Lawrence's 'industrial park'? If it is out of town or on the fringe somewhere, how will workers afford \$4-5/gal. gas to drive to work? Locational analysis of businesses tells us that businesses look at the quality of life

available for their workers when deciding whether to come to a community. Having no reliable public transit is a big deterrent for the types of 'clean' businesses that are most desirable and sought after for economic development in a college town. Do you have a director of economic development? Or an economic development consultant? If you can't securely fund the Transit system out of property taxes, fares, and grants, why bother funding that position? Come to think about it - that would be a place to find some money to switch to Transit.

Re-examine the City budget; there are probably other priorities less vital than Transit that could be cut.

And finally, if ever there was a golden opportunity for farsighted, expanded public transit, this time of steadily increasing gas prices and worry about carbon emissions and global warming surely must be one. Please reconsider your situation and abandon the idea of using a sales tax to fund Lawrence's Transit. Logically, the next step would be a sales tax to cover street maintenance...or sewer service...or City salaries,,,

Caroline Dieterle
727 Walnut Street
Iowa City, Iowa
52240
Tel. #319-338-8674 (land line) 319-325-0616 (cell)

From: Constance, Dennis [mailto:dcon@ku.edu]
Sent: Friday, August 01, 2008 10:25 AM
To: mdever@sunflower.com; robchestnut@sunflower.com; mikeamyx515@hotmail.com; boog@lawrence.ixks.com; suehack@sunflower.com
Cc: Lisa Patterson; David L. Corliss
Subject: An Open Letter To The Lawrence City Commission
Importance: High

Mayor, Commissioners, & Staff;

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Grassroots Action, I wish to submit the following open letter concerning the Lawrence Transit System for your consideration, and request that it be included in the packet for the August 5th meeting:

OPEN LETTER TO THE CITY COMMISSION

WILL THE CITY'S PROPOSED .20 SALES TAX SAVE THE T? OR WILL IT FALL SHORT?

THE EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT FAILURE IS LIKELY UNLESS WE SEEK BETTER FUNDING.

THAT'S WHY WE SAY...

.25 FOR THE T!

On July 22, a 4-to-1 majority of the City Commission voted ZERO DOLLARS for the bus system in 2009. Commissioners say they want to fund the T by passing a .50 sales tax in November, with .30 committed to infrastructure (mainly roads &

streets) and .20 committed to the T. BUT THE CITY'S OWN PROJECTIONS SHOW THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH TO KEEP THE BUSES RUNNING.

City transit staff reported to the Commission in June that a .20 sales tax would be TOO LITTLE to keep the city's buses repaired & running – it would amount, in effect, to a major permanent cut – and yet Commissioners have rejected the idea of seeking more.

The City's projections show that a .25 sales tax WOULD SAVE THE T. This would permit vehicle replacement & repair as the buses wear out. SO WE CALL UPON THE COMMISSION TO TREAT ROADS BUSES AND ROADS EQUALLY – THAT IS, TO SEEK A .25 SALES TAX FOR EACH.

ASKING FOR LESS WOULD SET US UP FOR FAILURE, NOT SUCCESS. A .20 sales tax would burden taxpayers BUT WOULD NOT SAVE THE T. To show seriousness Commissioners should seek SUFFICIENT funding. To show fairness, they should treat roads and buses equally.

Finally, to ensure continuity of service, we ask the City Commission to guarantee funding for the interim, from January-to-July 2009, for which no transit funding is currently allocated.

Anything less would be inadequate for those of us who need the T – seniors, the disabled, job seekers, workers without cars. Currently, 55% of the T's passengers ride 5 days a week; 39%

have ridden the T for 2 years or more; 40% ride the T to work, 15% to school, 13% to shop, and 8% to health care. 45% of the T's riders are non-white, 78% have no cars, and 70% have incomes below \$25,000.

WE AS A COMMUNITY CANNOT AFFORD TO LEAVE THE ELDERLY, THE DISABLED, AND LOW-INCOME WORKERS WITHOUT THE MEANS TO GET TO WORK, TO LOCAL RETAILERS, AND TO MEDICAL CARE.

To support a sales tax, we have to know that it will actually help – and help actual Lawrencians.

THAT'S WHY, ON AUG. 5TH, WE ASK THE CITY COMMISSION TO DO THE RIGHT THING --
.25 FOR THE T.

Join us! 6:30 p.m., Tuesday Aug. 5th, City Hall, 6 E. 6th St.

GRASSROOTS ACTION * GRASSROOTS ACTION * GRASSROOTS ACTION * Post Office Box
442135, Lawrence KS 66044, vision.for.lawrence@gmail.com