

# Memorandum

## City of Lawrence

### Public Transit

**TO:** Dave Corliss, City Manager

**FROM:** Robert A. Nugent, Transit Administrator

**CC:** Diane Stoddard, Assistant City Manager  
Cynthia Wagner, Assistant City Manager

**Date:** November 11, 2011

**RE:** Preliminary Analysis of Santa Fe Depot

From the start of transit service in Lawrence there has been a conscious effort to maintain the radial focus of the service in the proximity to downtown and Massachusetts Street. As the service has evolved we have made numerous attempts find an area in the downtown that would accommodate a large number of buses, while at the same time minimize the impacts of this activity on the immediate area. In recent months this has been exacerbated due to construction and the additional limitations it has imposed on our transit operation. Therefore, as we have done several times over the last ten years we have begun looking for alternatives for our transit operation.

This search has been focused on maintaining a high level of service to the immediate area of the downtown core. However there are very few sites within this downtown area that can adequately accommodate the number of vehicles and the level of activity that is associated with a major transfer location.

As requested, we have provided the attached cursory analysis of the Santa Fe Depot as a possible downtown transfer center.

## **Operating Lawrence Transit from the Santa Fe Depot**

### **Site**

The site is limited in size and geometry. It is also constrained by several historic elements. These limitations would make it difficult if not impossible, to fully accommodate an off-street bus transfer operation. Curb frontage, however, appears to be adequate to accommodate a partial linear (on-street) transfer operations.

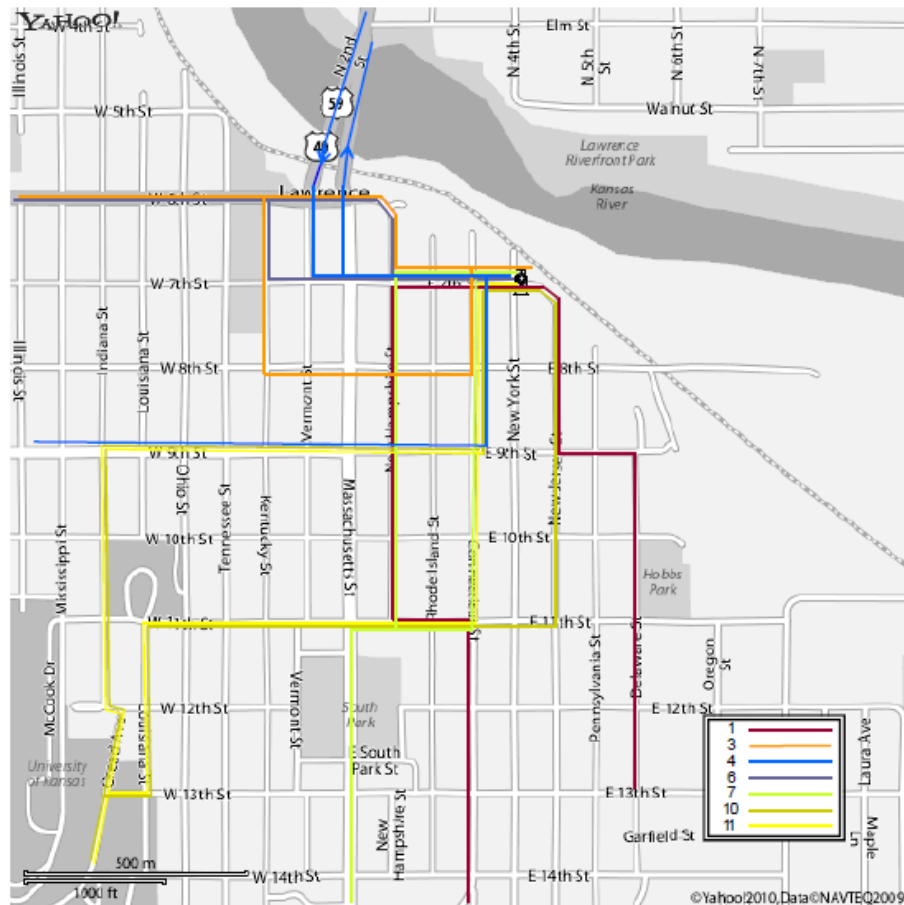
Access to the depot is provided via three roads: 7<sup>th</sup> Street from the west; New Jersey Street from the south; and New York Street from the south. Operationally, 7<sup>th</sup> Street provides the best and most compatible corridor for accessing this location since both New Jersey and New York streets are primarily residential streets and may not be capable of supporting the rigors of frequent bus traffic.

### **Location**

Changing the location of the downtown transfer location from 9<sup>th</sup> and Massachusetts to the Santa Fe Depot may cause incremental costs in route running times due to the changes of location. This additional time may be able to be accommodated through reducing vehicle recovery times. However, there is no guarantee that there will be adequate time in each route's schedule to accommodate the extension of every route. Further evaluation will have to be performed as the operational elements are further defined.

As can be seen from the following graphic, moving the downtown transfer location to the depot would not have any adverse affects on existing passengers. All of the routes would continue to provide easy access to the downtown since there alignment would continue to operate either through or in close proximity the downtown core. For those passengers traveling to points beyond the downtown transfers between routes would be made available at the depot.

### Downtown Routing: Santa Fe Station



### Operations

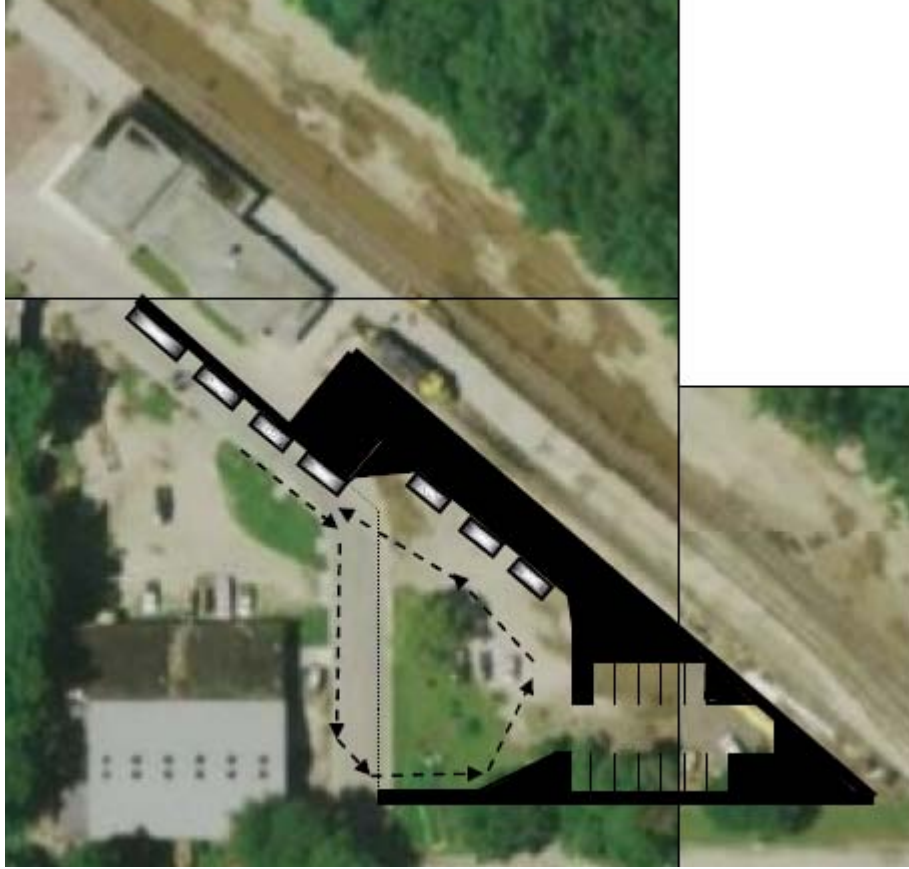
Currently we operate seven routes through the downtown #1, #3, #4, #6, #7, #10 and #11. Of these routes the #1 and #11 operate every 30 minutes; the #3 and #6 operate every 40 minutes; and the #4, #7 and #10 operate every 60 minutes. This inconsistency is the result of our ongoing efforts to transition our overall service from a historic 40 and 80 minute frequencies to 30 and 60 minute frequencies. The lack of consistency resulting from this transition has created some difficulties in developing route schedules in order to maintain transfers between routes. Even with 30 minute frequencies transfers are critical in order to reduce overall passenger travel times. Even with this variance in service our downtown transfer location must accommodate seven vehicles, which are realized at various times of each day of operation.

Our initial analysis found that we may be able to adequately accommodate our current peak volume of vehicles at this location. However, it is important to note that prior to any long term commitment a more detailed analysis of the available space would need to be performed.

Our cursory analysis looked at three options. The first option was a linear lineup of vehicles directly in front (to the south) of the depot. Additional curbing would be required in order to accommodate the peak volume of vehicles. This curbing would most likely have to be extended into the parking area to the west of the depot. In order to function operationally all of the vehicles would have to approach the depot via New Jersey. Although the simplest operational design the costs associated with using this approach may escalate due to roadbed failures that would occur from the rigors of operating larger (heavier) vehicles through this corridor.



A second approach would be to have vehicles approach from the west on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. In order to align vehicles for boarding and deboarding it would be necessary to incorporate a large turnaround bay (50' turning radius). This would enable vehicles to turnaround in a controlled area without operating on numerous streets. It would also eliminate the possible rework of New Jersey in order to support our activity. This approach would reduce the available parking spaces proposed for the east side of the site.



A third approach was also considered which sought to use the area on the west end of the depot. This area provided adequate space for our operation but would have necessitated the abandonment of both the fountain and the brick parking lot. Since both have historic significance we eliminated this approach.

### **Office Space**

The current Lawrence Transit System administrative office at 933 New Hampshire includes three personal offices, a meeting space and limited storage. It is also located in close proximity to our primary downtown transfer location. This proximity provides staff with ready oversight of services, as well as, access of passengers to our administrative offices.

Moving our administrative offices to the Santa Fe Depot without moving our operations would limit our ability to oversee the operation of services. However, operations could be monitored remotely if the administrative offices were relocated to the depot without moving our transfer activities. Monitoring operations in this manner would make it extremely difficult for transit passengers to get to our offices. Therefore, any consideration of moving the administrative offices into offices at the depot must consider the negative aspect of separating the operational element.

In moving the administrative offices to the depot we would want to maintain the same relative spaces as our current office. In order to do this we would propose the following use of the depot's space:

- Waiting Room – This would function as a waiting room for both rail and bus passengers.
- Ticket Office – This would be used for ticket sales, customer service and for two personal offices. This would also include areas for the production of T Lift identification cards and general business. Since administrative functions would have to be performed in this area some considerations would have to be given to controlling sound levels from the waiting area. It would also be imperative that this area was able to be secured after regular office hours.
- Agent's Office – This would be used by the public transit administrator.
- Freight Office – The freight office would be used as a meeting room and file storage. By allowing a separate entrance through the freight office entrance meetings from other departments could also be accommodated.
- Baggage Room/Loading Dock – This area would be finished out as office space and storage for use by BNSF.

Note: Consideration should be given to creating a separate "unisex" bathroom either in the file room or as part of the freight office area.

### **Other Considerations**

Any consideration given to operating transit at this location must include a well defined security/loitering plan. With a shared waiting room for both rail and bus passengers, portions of the depot will be open for approximately 15 hours a day. The administrative office for Lawrence Transit is currently open between Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Even during office hours our limited administrative staff are not trained or qualified to monitor activities in the public areas of the depot while performing their regular duties.

In closing we must make it clear that the analysis included in this memorandum was performed in a cursory manner. Any further consideration of moving transit administrative and operations to the depot would warrant additional study. This is especially true when considering the physical limitations of the site and the requirements of operational aspects of the service.

### **Recommendation**

After our initial analysis staff recognizes there may be adequate space and facilities to accommodate transit operations at the depot site. Therefore, we recommend further exploration and detailed analysis of this site as it pertains to a possible transfer location and administrative office.