

City of Lawrence

Public Transit

TO: Dave Corliss, City Manager

FROM: Robert A. Nugent, Public Transit Administrator

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

Date: May 2, 2012

RE: Agenda Item: Recommendations for Changes in Public Transit Service

Please place the following item on the agenda for the May 8, 2012 City Commission meeting:

Recommendations for Changes in Public Transit Service

Background:

In October 2011 City and KU staff began evaluating existing transit service for operational inefficiencies and possible improvements. Routes were evaluated using various measures which included overall ridership, productivity, passengers per mile, on-time performance, and cost per mile. Also evaluated was information and requests provided by the general public. As the result of this planning process, a series of service change proposals was developed for possible implementation in August 2012. On December 13, 2011 the Public Transit Advisory Committee approved the proposals and directed that they be taken to the public for review and comment. Likewise, the University Transit Commission took the same action on January 25, 2012.

Public meetings were held on the following dates:

- February 15, 2012
Building 1, Douglas County Fairgrounds,
2110 Harper Street.
- February 16, 2012
Malott Room, Kansas Union, University of Kansas.
- February 17, 2012
Lawrence Transit Administrative Office
933 New Hampshire Street.

Approximately 50 people attended these meetings and offered comments, concerns and suggestions about the proposed changes. Staff also received comments concerns and suggestions via telephone and email. This input, as well as additional analysis and evaluation was used to develop the final set of recommendations. These final recommendations were

presented to and approved by the Public Transit Advisory Committee on March 13, 2012 and April 19, 2012. Likewise, the final recommendations were presented to and approved by the University.

Proposed Changes to Service:

Route 2 (New Route)

With the discontinuation of the southern portion of Route 32 (see discussion below) and recent requests for direct connections between Haskell Indian Nations University and the University of Kansas a new route is recommended. This route will operate from Haskell Indian Nations campus to through Louisiana 25th, Alabama, 19th to Jayhawk Boulevard. This route was designed to address the public's concerns about losing service on Naismith, 21st, Louisiana 25th, and Alabama. Staff also took into consideration requests for direct service between Haskell Indian Nations University and the KU campus. The route will operate 12 hours a day when KU is in session. The additional cost to provide this service is estimated to be \$100,000 per year

Route 3

In August 2010 Lawrence Transit began operating a non-traditional transit service on route 3 known as "Flex" service. This curb-to-curb service sought to match resources to demand by providing flexible routing in new (previously unserved) areas around the existing Route 3. In order to maintain service levels without additional costs the existing fixed route service was maintained during peak periods (6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.). The Flex service operated in the off-peak periods (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.).

The public's acceptance of Flex service resulted in continued requests for more expansion of the Flex zone. As a result, in August 2011 the Flex zone of Route 3 was expanded to a new area to the east. Over the last twenty months Route 3 has shown a slow but steady increase in ridership. The majority of this ridership has been in the Flex zone portions of the route. During that same period staff has continued to receive requests from the public for increases in the Flex zone of the route.

This recommendation expands the Flex zone on Route 3 west past Monterey to Wakarusa. The frequency has been reduced from 40 minutes to 60 minutes. This not only provides enough additional time to cover the expanded Flex zone but also places Route 3 on a consistent and predictable frequency with the rest of the City routes. This provides a much better opportunity of accommodate transfers from, or to, other routes. The route will no longer provide direct, regularly scheduled service to the hospital. Service will still be provided as part of the Flex service. Direct regularly scheduled service (every 30 minutes) will be made available on Route 6. For a description of changes to Route 6 see below.

Input received as part of our public meeting process was generally positive about the Flex service. Although no negative comments were received there were a few questions about how the Flex service operates.

Route 5

In August 2010 Route 5 service was restructured. Along with providing more direct service along the 23rd Street corridor the frequency of service was improved from 40 minutes during peak to 30 minutes. This was an attempt to get a higher level of service to the employers in the East Hills Business Park. A recent ridership analysis found that the additional level of service was not successful in producing additional ridership. In order to match the service to the demand for service frequency will be reduced from 30 minutes in peak and 60 minutes in off peak to 60 minutes all day. The route will also change alignment to service the future location of the Lawrence Community Shelter. Due to safety reasons service to the future location of the Lawrence Community Shelter will be provided in the eastbound direction only. Passengers wanting to travel westbound from that location will have to board on the eastbound trip and ride to the terminal loop of the route in East Hills Industrial Park before traveling west.

Route 6

In August 2010 Route 6 was restructured to provide more direct and predictable service along the 6th Street corridor. As a result ridership on Route 6 has witnessed a steady increase. In order to promote a continuing ridership growth this recommendation increases the level of service from 40 minutes all day to 30 minutes all day. The route will also be realigned to provide regular scheduled service to the hospital every 30 minutes. This portion of the route will replace regular service previously provided on Route 3. The additional service is estimated at \$90,000 per year.

Route 19 (New Route)

As part of our ongoing efforts to coordinate services between the City and the University services a new route has been recommended. This route is in response to continued requests for service for the southwest portion of our community and the ridership potential of the area. The majority of these requests have come from residents of high-density residential facilities that want more direct access to KU. The University has been unable to respond to these requests due to limitations of resources. In order to respond to these continued requests the City and the University developed a second coordinated route. The cost of the service will be shared between the University and the City. The service will operate 12 hours a day when KU is in session. Route 9 currently provides service from the southwest portion of the city to retail and commercial areas from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The cost to provide this additional service is estimated to be \$100,000 per year

Note:

The following routes are funded by the University of Kansas. These changes have already been approved as part of the University process. These changes are provided for informational purposes only.

Route 30x

A thorough ridership analysis indicated that Route 30x ridership has been continuing to decrease over the last couple of years. This decrease in ridership appears to be the result of potential riders moving out of the Bob Billings corridor. It may also appear that there is active shifting of existing ridership between the three routes (10, 30 and 30x) serving the corridor. Staff determined that the ridership decrease was significant enough that a reduction of service was justified. There was limited input from the public in regards to the discontinuation of this route especially since alternative routes were available. This route is

completely funded by the University. The discontinuation of Route 30x has already been approved by the University.

Route 32

As part of their annual route analysis the University, with assistance from City staff, evaluated Route 32 for ridership. It was determined that the southern portion of the route, operating on Naismith, 21st, Louisiana 25th, and Alabama had some of the lowest ridership of any segment of service provided by the University. In order to better utilize resources the University will be discontinuing service on this southern portion of the route. There were considerable comments opposed to this discontinuation. The City and University worked together to address these concerns. The result was the development of a new route (Route 2) that would provide service to the area previously served by Route 32. This route is completely funded by the University.

Route 36

Portions of the route alignment will be changed in order to better utilize resources and coordinate service with other routes. In specific, the route will no longer provide service along 11th Street and Mississippi. The route will now operate the full length of Jayhawk Boulevard. Service has also been coordinated with Route 32.

Route 38

Due to operational concerns and poor on-time performance staff reviewed operational elements of Route 38. It was determined that traffic signals at two secondary intersections were causing unnecessary delays and additional time to operate the scheduled service. In order to address the issues the route alignment on Route 38 will be changed. The route will no longer operate across 25th to Ridge Court to 24th to Ousdahl. Instead the route will operate on Crestline to 23rd to Ousdahl. There was no input from the public regarding this change. This route is completely funded by the University. The change of route alignment has already been approved by the University.

Recommendation and Action Requested:

If appropriate, approve changes in public transit service. These changes would be implemented in August 2012.