
MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 6, 2017

TO: City Staff & City Commissioners

FROM: Leslie Soden, Mayor

SUBJECT: Lawrence Transit Comprehensive Operational Analysis

Report found here: <https://lawrenceks.org/mpo/transitcoa/>

Overall I am very pleased and impressed with the thorough analysis done in this report. I generally support the findings & recommendations. The Guiding Principles on page 1-2 are excellent, and I very much look forward to our discussion on April 11th and 18th.

CONCERNS & SUGGESTIONS

- Please add middle schools & private **schools** to the maps in chapter 2. I am concerned that overlooking these locations might have impacted transit route analysis.
- Page 2-1: This quote from the report is very important to our concurrent discussion on **sidewalks**... "Nearly all transit riders are also pedestrians on at least one end of their trip. Thus the safety and comfort of the walking environment strongly affects ridership." Perhaps we should investigate using transit funds to help pay for sidewalk improvements? (For example, page 5-36: "The two current primary transit hubs in Lawrence, Vermont Street near 7th...and the Kansas Union, are not ideal locations from a [pedestrian] safety perspective.")
- Page 2-17: This map has a significant portion of Lawrence grayed out concerning the location of "young adults". A review of young adults that are **teenagers**, excluding KU students, might impact results from the transit need analysis. Obtaining feedback at our public & private high schools might yield more data to consider.
- Page 2-21: There are also a large portion of **grayed-out** geographic areas in the Transit Need Index map. Why are they not analyzed?

- Page 3-9, figure 3-5: In 2015 the Night Line costs \$32.61/trip with an average of 1.7 users per hour. Couple that data with the suggestions on page 5-30, 5-31 & 5-42 to review **partnerships** with TNC's (Uber, Lyft, private taxi), we might improve our ridership and cost efficiency by subsidizing Night Line trips with private partners.
- Page 5-2: Recommended System Map. I would strongly encourage evaluation of the addition of a **North-South route** connecting the employment center area on North Iowa via Kasold Street and/or Monterey Way to the south edge of our city. This may also help to improve ridership by creating more direct routes for those that live West of Iowa Street. In addition, this route may be even more important considering the quote on page 5-27... "Most ADA impacts (i.e. loss of service) will be felt in northern Lawrence in the small area surrounding Monterey Way, Kasold Drive, and Peterson Road."
- Page 5-37: I agree with the following statement... "Continuously improving the local transit **app** should remain a top long-term priority of Lawrence Transit and KUOW." It was discouraging to read from public feedback that the app is not reliable or clear. I believe improving this app will provide a better rider experience, especially from my own personal experience with other city's transit systems.

HUBS & AMENITIES

I was very encouraged to read that we are already somewhat using a 4-"hub" model ("hubs" at the library downtown, 6th & Wakarusa, 31st & Iowa, Kansas Union). I continue to believe that striving to build our transit system map on one central hub may not be our best option. I would recommend that City Commissioners read page 5-36 in it's entirety regarding our hub conversation.

From Page 5-36:

- "Higher frequency service, coupled with more on-street passenger amenities may reduce the need for a single central hub of the type that Lawrence Transit envisioned in its 2016 Tiger Grant application."
- "Higher service frequency makes passenger amenities such as benches and shelters more important since passengers are more likely to make transfer away from designated hubs."

- "Well-designed amenities are also an important marketing tool ... a strategic investment in passenger amenities is relatively low-cost, high reward strategy for Lawrence Transit to pursue in the long-term."

Page 3-11: Amenities Map. I strongly believe that bus shelters should be included at the following locations: Middle schools, private schools, grocery stores, police station, county jail, courthouses, Lawrence Community Shelter, employment centers, retail centers and at multi-family housing bus stops.

POTENTIAL FARE-FREE SYSTEM?? (Page 6-20 to 6-22)

Off-hand, the idea of a free transit system is very attractive to me. However, this was a very interesting section to read analyzing the pro's and con's of converting our transit system to a free-fare system. And considering the statement on Page 6-2 "In 2015, state and federal funding met 48 percent of operating expenses, while farebox revenues contributed 8 percent and local sales tax revenues were 44 percent.", I am concerned relying on our current federal & state administration for those revenues might not be our most prudent decision. I believe after reading this report that maintaining our current fare system is appropriate, especially with the addition of smart-phone payments proposed on page 6-15.