

June 15, 2015

To: Lawrence City Commission
From: Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)
Re: Funding for Johnson County Transit (K-10 Connector)

Dear Lawrence City Commission,

We are writing to you regarding some concerns that we have about the request for funding from Johnson County for the K-10 Connector transit route. Johnson County Transit funding levels have increased over the years, while their ridership has decreased. Meanwhile, Lawrence Transit funding has remained at the same level, but ridership in Lawrence has grown significantly. While it's true that we have been able to do more with less in Lawrence, it is imperative that we hold onto our available resources if we are to make the improvements to our service that residents expect and deserve. In 2008, citizens voted for a sales tax to support public transit in Lawrence. They would be surprised and disappointed by the news that a portion of those funds is being diverted to another community.

From a business standpoint, we are not supportive of the transfer of funds to Johnson County for the following reasons:

- Since 2011, Johnson County Transit's overall ridership has declined 10% while Lawrence Transit's ridership has increased 56%.
- Since 2012, the ridership on the K-10 Connector has declined over 16% and according to their projections is expected to decline another 15% between 2014 and 2015.
- The K-10 Connector operates every 30 minutes while seven Lawrence Transit routes are still operating every 60 minutes. The K-10 Connector operates year round even though 97% of the ridership is directly associated with JCCC or KU. Lawrence Transit currently operates two routes that primarily serve KU students but does not operate them when school is not in session.
- Johnson County Transit's federal funding levels have increased by approximately 1 million dollars over the last couple years as a result of a new urban allocation formula.
- State funding is based on ridership, revenue miles and population. Underwriting the cost of operating the K-10 Connector not only provides Johnson County with additional funds from Lawrence Transit—but also allows them to take full credit for the ridership—therefore guaranteeing a portion of their future state funding which should be awarded to Lawrence Transit.
- Reductions in state funding that Johnson County Transit experienced a couple of years ago have been reversed and state funding levels have returned to previous levels.

- KCATA took over administrative responsibilities of operating Johnson County Transit earlier this year in order to reduce the high cost of administering the service. This is anticipated to save approximately 1 million dollars per year.

Unmet needs in Lawrence:

- Kansas is looking at raising the state sales tax. That would make it much less likely that voters will be supportive of a new referendum in 2018, especially for additional service and amenities in Lawrence. Therefore, we need the funding for our current unmet needs.
- In honoring the 2008 referendum, we want to make sure the Lawrence community is well supported by providing the best transit service. The transfer of funds to Johnson County would be going against Lawrence's own needs.
- The estimated cost of a transit center and the traffic improvements necessary for supporting the facility is approximately \$4 million.
- The estimated capital costs of additional vehicles for realigning routes to operate through a new transit center and to reduce all routes to 30 minute service is \$1.5 million.
- In addition to capital costs, the estimated increase in annual operating costs to provide 30 minute service would be \$1.4 million.
- The estimated cost to double the number of shelters and other amenities throughout the system is \$500K.
- The estimated increase in annual operating costs to provide a limited level of Sunday service would be \$500K.

In summary, we feel that funding Johnson County Transit is a poor investment. Although there are some in Lawrence who do benefit by using the K-10 Connector—mostly students who are traveling to Johnson County Community College—we feel that the money could be more effectively used for service in Lawrence.

Lawrence Public Transit Advisory Committee