REQUESTED ATTENDEES:

Voting Members
1. Robert Nugent (Lawrence Transit Administrator)
2. Carrie Lindsey (Lawrence Housing Authority)
3. Danny Kaiser (KU on Wheels Manager)
4. Patty Gibbons (Independence Inc.)
5. Heather Thies (Cottonwood Inc.)
6. Tina Roberts (Douglas County Senior Services)
7. Tracy Kihm (Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center)
8. (Douglas County Private sector provider)
9. Debbie Walker (Pioneer Ridge Assisted Living)

Non-Voting Members
1. Scott Lein (CTD #1 Program Consultant - KDOT)
2. Daniel Nguyen (Federal Transit Administration - Region 7 Office)
3. Douglas County Private Transit Providers, or Assisted Living Center Transit Providers not presently represented on the RTAC by a voting member
4. Shawn Strate (Johnson County Transit)

Staff
1. Todd Girdler (Senior Transportation Planner)
2. Jessica Mortinger (Transportation Planner)

AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order

2. Action Item: Approval of Minutes from the October 27th, 2011 Regular Meeting (see enclosed draft minutes)

3. Discussion Item: Draft CPT-HSTP (attached): RTAC members will provide the final comments and/or consider the CPT-HSTP for approval.

4. Other Business

5. Public Comments: This item is to allow brief public comments on items not listed specifically on the agenda. Comments from each individual or organization will be limited to five minutes.

6. Next Meeting: March 15th, 2011 or another date set by the RTAC

Special Accommodations: Please notify the Lawrence-Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (L-DC MPO) at (785)832-3150 at least 72 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend this meeting (i.e., qualified interpreter, large print, reader, hearing assistance). We will make every effort to meet reasonable requests.

The L-DC MPO programs do not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color or national origin, according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For more information or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, see http://www.lawrenceks.org/pds/Title6 or call (785)832-3154.
VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:
Robert Nugent (Lawrence Transit Administrator)
Carrie Lindsey (Lawrence Housing Authority)
Danny Kaiser (KU on Wheels Manager)
Heather Thies (Cottonwood Inc.)
Tina Roberts (Douglas County Senior Services)
Tracy Kihm (Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center)
Debbie Walker (Pioneer Ridge Assisted Living)

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:
Scott Lein (KDOT CTD #1 Program Coordinator)
Shawn Strate (Johnson County Transit)

STAFF PRESENT:
Todd Girdler (L-DC MPO Senior Transportation Planner)
Jessica Mortinger (L-DC MPO Transportation Planner)

Item 1: Call to Order – Tracy Kihm called the meeting to order at 1:38 PM, a quorum was present. Introductions were made.

Item 2: Action Item: of Minutes from the August 11th, 2011 Regular Meeting Tracy Kihm asked if anyone had any changes to the minutes and Todd Girdler indicated he had provided some grammatical corrections. Danny Kaiser made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Heather Thies, the motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Discussion Item: Draft CPT-HSTP: Jessica Mortinger asked the RTAC members to continue the discussion of the next steps and implementation text that was added by MPO staff. Tracy Kihm read each bullet point and solicited member comments.

- MPO staff clarified that the update to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan would be on the spring 2012 agenda for RTAC.
- Todd Girdler updated the RTAC on the MPO Policy Board’s passage of a Complete Street resolution. He also indicated the city released a draft policy that was on the agenda at the October 25th City Commission meeting. The Lawrence Complete Streets Committee asked City Commissioners to wait until after December 6th to approve the policy to allow for appropriate comment by the community committee. The City Commissioners agreed and directed staff to collect and respond to public comments on the draft policy. MPO staff indicated they would forward any public comment opportunities to the RTAC.
- Bob Nugent indicated that he thought it might be helpful for providers and their maintenance staffs to regularly discuss vehicle maintenance issues. This could benefit the providers and the state by working to improve vehicle standards under state purchasing contracts. It might also be helpful in assisting maintenance professionals in sharing techniques and solutions to the common maintenance problems. Heather Thies indicated that Cottonwood would find this helpful as they experience monthly maintenance costs on their vehicles. The sharing of maintenance logs might be mutually beneficial to all providers. The providers present agreed to add this to the short term implementation steps.
- Shawn Strate indicated that the conclusion fails to make a powerful point that the growing demand for services based on demographic projections will be difficult for
providers to meet without additional resources. The members present agreed that this point should be called out in the conclusion.

- Heather Thies asked that the RTAC consider regularly reviewing and sharing each agency’s continuity of services and/or emergency management plan. This could be helpful for each agency to know what the other provider’s plans are and help providers who have not yet written a plan to draft a plan. She participates in the Douglas County Together Prepared meetings for disaster preparation and values the ability for providers to share this information. Bob Nugent agreed that it would be valuable to discuss priorities and plans, stating that their emergency management priority is to meet the life support transportation needs. The members present also asked KDOT if they keep an emergency contact list. Scott Lien indicated that KDOT emergency management has a list. The members asked KDOT to share that list. MPO staff agreed to add this discussion item to the action steps.

The MPO staff indicated that these comments/changes would be added to the draft and that one more meeting should finalize the plan for adoption in November. The plan will be adopted by the RTAC and sent to the MPO Policy Board for adoption.

**Item 4: Discussion Item: Lawrence and Douglas County’s Retiree Attraction Task Force:** Jessica Mortinger informed the RTAC members about the new efforts on behalf of the task force to attract retirees. Ms. Mortinger indicated that the task force plans on having a transportation issues subcommittee and asked if any providers present had been invited to participate. Bob Nugent indicated that he would be participating as an advisor to the transportation subcommittee, ensuring the process has realistic expectations. Ms. Mortinger indicated that it would be important for an RTAC member to be present in the process to ensure that the providers’ needs would be addressed, especially in light of the process this group has gone through in developing the new CPT-HSTP. Mr. Nugent indicated he could represent RTAC concerns, report back to RTAC about the task force process, and when appropriate contact other appropriate providers. The members agreed that Mr. Nugent could represent them and contact them for participation if necessary.

**Item 5: Other Business**
Jessica Mortinger announced that the MPO had been awarded the Community Planning Grant competitive funding to fund the multimodal studies in Douglas County. The studies include a countywide bikeway system plan, a commuter park and ride study, and a transit stop accessibility study. Carrie Lindsey asked that the consultants visit the involved agencies to see the operations first hand when developing the plans. Tracy Kihm asked Shawn Strate if the JO stopped in Eudora. Mr. Strate indicated that the current express route K-10 connector has no plans to add stops; however additional service expansions developed in that corridor would attempt to address requested stop locations at Eudora and Desoto. Ms. Mortinger indicated that the Park and Ride study would address locations where feasible to tie into existing transit services.

Shawn Strate reported that the Mid-America Regional Council is working to develop a one click/one call online/phone resource to advertise services available. They have applied for a grant to fund this project. This will replace the existing list of service provided on an outdated KU Med Center webpage. Jessica Mortinger indicated she would contact Tyler Means at MARC to find out more information and clarify how this relates to the efforts by the Mr. Goodcents foundation.

**Item 6: Public Comments:** No public comments.
**Item 7: Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held December 1st, 2011 from 2:00-3:00 at the Douglas County Senior Center Conference Room.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 PM.
Funding Note:
This report was funded in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration [and Federal Transit Administration], U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the authors [or agency] expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the U. S. Department of Transportation.

Title VI Note:
The L-DC MPO hereby gives public notice that it is the policy of the agency to assure full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Title VI requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, or national origin, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity for which the L-DC MPO receives federal financial assistance. Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint with the L-DC MPO. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with the L-DC MPO’s Title VI Coordinator within one hundred and eighty (180) days following the date of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Discriminatory Complaint Form, please see our website at http://www.lawrenceks.org/pds/MPO.
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INTRODUCTION: FEDERAL REGULATORY BACKGROUND

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law on August 10, 2005. This law established programs and funding for the Federal Transit Administration through federal fiscal year 2009, and this law has been extended to the present while Congress debates the development of a new surface transportation act to replace SAFETEA-LU. That law also requires the development of a Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) for areas and transit providers to receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding through the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT). Applicants for KDOT’s public transportation grant program are required to participate in the CPT-HSTP development process. This plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers, as well as the public. The implementation of this plan will occur within that same inclusive process and be overseen by KDOT officials, reviewed by members of Coordinated Transit District #1 (which covers Douglas County and other counties in Northeast Kansas) and the newly formed Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC) for Douglas County (which is an advisory committee of the Lawrence Douglas County MPO).

A coordinated plan (CPT-HSTP) must include:

- A unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery; and
- Identification of the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited incomes; and
- Strategies for meeting those needs; and
- Prioritization of services

Human Services Transportation is defined as transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults (60+), and individuals with lower incomes. This could include services provided by public transit agencies, municipalities, human service agencies, and private providers such as taxi or medical livery companies.

FTA Section 5310 is the only funding program allocated in Douglas County that requires a locally coordinated CPT-HSTP. The Section 5310 Vehicle Grant Program provides vehicle grants to non-profit agencies or municipalities to provide transportation to seniors and people with disabilities.

Currently the following FTA funds are allocated through KDOT to Douglas County transit providers.

- **Section 5310, Capital**
  Independence, Inc.

- **Section 5311, Capital & Operating**
  Independence, Inc.
  Douglas County Senior Services, Inc.

- **Section 5307, Capital and Operating**
  The T- Lawrence, Kansas

- **State Operating funds**
  Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center
  Cottonwood Incorporated
  Douglas County Senior Services, Inc.
  The T- Lawrence, Kansas
**PLAN APPROACH**

The process of developing this Coordinated Public Transit- Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) seeks to collect and analyze meaningful organizational and consumer information to create a plan for future coordination and improvement to services in Douglas County. The Lawrence – Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is committed to proactively involving all interested parties in identifying and addressing transportation issues. The goal is to foster improved two-way communication and trust between the MPO, local paratransit and human service providers, and their consumers. Although a federal requirement, the MPO feels that local contribution to transportation planning is vital for the metropolitan area. The citizens of this area deserve the advantages of better transportation planning that cannot be done without participation from and coordination between the people that provide, use, and fund transit services in Douglas County.

The process for planning this document included meetings of the local public transit and human services transportation providers. An attendance list for the organized meetings can be found in the appendix.

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

Douglas County is 457 square miles of land. The County has a 2010 Census population of 110,826 and a population density of 243 persons per square mile. This has increased from the 219 people per square mile recorded with the 2000 Census. Douglas County is composed of unincorporated area and the following cities: Lawrence, Eudora, Lecompton, and Baldwin City. Lawrence is the major population center in Douglas County, with a 2010 Census population of 87,643, accounting for approximately 73% of the county’s population.
The following tables show a breakdown of Douglas County and Lawrence population data from the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS). The 2009 ACS totals are slightly higher than the 2010 census totals. At the time of this plan’s development the detailed 2010 census data had not been released yet, so the latest ACS data was used. However the important thing to note from this data is that the Douglas County population is growing and a substantial number of people living in the county are seniors and a substantial proportion of those seniors have disabilities. This follows national trends noted in the next section of this report.

**DOUGLAS COUNTY**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Douglas County Demographic Information</th>
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<td>Disabled Percent of Population</td>
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**LAWRENCE**

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**IMPACTS TO FUTURE SERVICES**

Reduced funding in combination with increasing demands for public transit and human services transportation programs has made it challenging for many agencies to continue providing essential services to meet the needs of their clients and the community. Often, difficult choices have to be made between which services are provided and which are not.
Below is a list of societal changes potentially impacting the future of transit services in Douglas County; these changes include (but are not limited to):

- Increase in population (Lawrence and Douglas County desires to become a retiree destination and are actively working to recruit retirees)
- Increase in number of elderly (65 and older—Baby Boomers retiring)
- Increase in number of disabled (older population, disabled veterans, and cumulative effects of obesity)
- Increase in poverty due to economic conditions (layoffs, loss of nest eggs, and loss of retirement benefits)
- Requirements for environmentally friendly transportation options
- Concerns about the greenhouse effect and global warming
- Air quality requirements affecting vehicles
- Operational costs continue to rise as ability of passengers to pay continues to decline due to the economy
- Funding streams that continue to decline and that require increased sustainability proof.

Most, if not all, of the factors listed above are out of the control of small transit and paratransit operators trying to meet the transport needs of the elderly and disabled persons in Douglas County. It may be possible for some small incremental increases in operational efficiencies to occur and for improved coordination between agencies providing paratransit services to be enacted. However, those improvements that could be locally controlled will only go so far. Locally, the area’s paratransit providers are already coordinating to get people to where they need to go with some riders using multiple providers in a single week. That coordination is a good start. Albeit, the larger national and regional trends of demographics and higher transport costs cannot be controlled locally, and those trends will make it more difficult for small paratransit operators, especially human service agencies with tight budgets, to stay in the paratransit business. Although the trends mentioned above indicate that Douglas County will need a robust paratransit system to handle future demands, the future of the area’s paratransit and transit services is uncertain. Without changes in national and statewide attention to this paratransit segment of the transportation market the future mobility options for our citizens with disabilities and/or senior age look rather disappointing. It will be impossible for providers to continue to maintain the services to meet the growing demand without additional funding to do so.

INVENTORY OF EXISTING TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS AND SERVICES
Public transportation services in Douglas County consist of local public transportation services, university bus services, and a variety of specialized transportation services, which are available to sub-segments of the community. The providers and services are listed (in alphabetical order) below with details on individual services provided in the following tables.

- Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center
- Cottonwood Incorporated
- Douglas County Senior Services, Inc.
- Independence, Inc.
- Johnson County Transit- K-10 Connector
- KU on Wheels, University of Kansas Parking & Transit
- Lawrence – Douglas County Housing Authority
- The T - Lawrence, Kansas

<table>
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<th>Operator</th>
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<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bert Nash</td>
<td>200 Maine Street, Suite A, Lawrence, KS 66044</td>
<td>Tracy Khm</td>
<td>785-843-9192</td>
<td>BertNash.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottonwood, Inc.</td>
<td>2801 West 31st, Lawrence KS 66047</td>
<td>Heather Thies &amp; JR Condra</td>
<td>785-842-0550</td>
<td>cwood.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Douglas County Senior Services, Inc.</td>
<td>745 Vermont Street, Lawrence KS 66044</td>
<td>Tina Roberts</td>
<td>785-842-0543</td>
<td>dgcoseniorservices.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence, Inc.</td>
<td>2001 Haskell Avenue, Lawrence KS 66046</td>
<td>Patty Gibbons</td>
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<td>indepenceinc.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnson County Transit</td>
<td>1701 West 56 Highway, Olathe KS 66061</td>
<td></td>
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<td>thejo.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KU on Wheels</td>
<td>1501 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence KS 66047</td>
<td>Danny Kaiser</td>
<td>785-842-7275</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lawrence - Douglas County Housing Authority</td>
<td>1600 Haskell Avenue, Lawrence KS 66046</td>
<td>Carrie Lindsey</td>
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<td>The T - Lawrence Transit</td>
<td>6 E 6th St., Lawrence KS 66044</td>
<td>Robert Nugent</td>
<td>785-832-3465</td>
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Operator Service Details
Other local transportation services operate in Douglas County including a shuttle to the Kansas City International Airport, taxi companies and the Greyhound Bus Lines. Persons residing in Douglas County, including people also using paratransit services may also use these other services. But there is no readily available data on that use. There is anecdotal information that some paratransit riders use taxis for transport if other services are not available, but this taxi option is viewed as a last choice option due to the cost to the rider.

**DEMANDS AND UNMET NEEDS - GAPS IDENTIFICATION**

**PROVIDER NEEDS SUMMARY**

There are a variety of ride needs requested of transportation service providers in Douglas County. The transportation needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes vary by trip purpose.

It is very important in the transportation planning process to identify and then work to fill gaps in existing services. The needs assessment provides the basis for recognizing where and how service for the population groups of concern could be improved. Significant gaps and barriers faced by transit dependent populations can be identified from the transit provider’s perspective. Gaps were identified by providers in Douglas County through their answers to the following questions. The questions and their answers are listed below.

**Spatial gaps – Are there origins, destinations, or larger areas not served by transit and/or paratransit?**
• A portion of transit dependent individuals live outside of Lawrence in more rural areas or outlying towns without access to fixed route transit services. These towns are served by human service agencies that operate out of Lawrence. Currently Independence Inc. is the only provider in the county that regularly provides demand response rides outside of the Lawrence City Limits. However, this provider denies about 20 rides per month. They cannot meet the requests of all customers. Douglas County Senior Services provides rides in Baldwin City, Eudora and Lecompton on a limited basis.

• Fixed route transit is only provided within Lawrence by Lawrence Transit and KU on Wheels. Often times the origins and destinations don’t match the riders’ needs. The Johnson County Transit operated K-10 Connector Route is the only fixed route that operates between Douglas & Johnson Counties. There is a lack of connecting services from Douglas County to Downtown Kansas City and Topeka which are two places that riders often need or want to go.

• One provider identified lack of transportation to Baldwin City as problematic to their ability to retain tenants and maintain low vacancy rates at available housing located in Baldwin City.

• Providers agreed that with the limited resources they are doing the best job they can to match customers to ride availability.

Temporal Gaps - Hours of Operation – Is transportation via transit necessary or highly desirable outside of current service hours / days of the week?

• Providers agreed that customer travel needs are around the clock. Most services are designed for providing peak service for daytime trips to and from work and to doctor offices. This timeframe doesn't provide much flexibility in work scheduling and trips for events that occur on weekends. Any additional service hours would be helpful to customers of each provider. This includes, early morning, night owl and expanded weekend service.

• Lawrence Transit is working to try and cater service to demand with peak and non-peak scheduling to attract more ridership.

• The K-10 Connector only operates Monday-Friday, with no weekend trips.

Frequency – Is more frequent transit service needed to make certain types of trips?

• Lawrence Transit previously had 40/80 minute route frequencies. In the attempt to provide service based on demand, they have changed some route frequencies to 30/60 minutes. However, due to timing and funding some routes remain at the 40 minute frequency. Having three frequencies at four transfer points across Lawrence makes connecting and planning trips using more than one bus route somewhat difficult and confusing. Increasing frequency of fixed routes and standardizing those frequencies would help transfers.
Connectivity – Is there difficulty transferring between transit or paratransit services?

- Connections between Lawrence Transit and KU on Wheels fixed route services are working better as a result of the recent coordination effort between the two services. These two services now use a joint route map/schedule guide, and they accept each others’ bus passes.

- Providers identified instances where transferring from the K-10 Connector has been difficult for some clients, based on availability of services to transfer to and ability to fund the second part of the trip.

- Providers identified coordination of services for individuals to meet their travel needs in Lawrence. This includes customers making varying legs of their trips with different providers in the county. These connections are between both different demand response and fixed route providers. These trips are coordinated on a case by case basis by the providers and customers. This arrangement seems to work well for established riders that are well known by the providers involved, but for new riders it can be difficult to find a mix of providers and trip times that works.

Paratransit Beyond ADA Requirements – Are there needs for paratransit service beyond the ADA-mandated level of service?

- Paratransit users sometimes need a level of service above and beyond what is required by the ADA, such as service provided on the same day it is requested, where and when the fixed route service does not operate, or have the ability to accommodate "uncommon" wheelchairs or mobility devices.

- Paratransit providers are often asked to provide door to door transport with assistance in carrying bags.

- Drivers, who are comfortable operating a vehicle during the day, may be limited in transportation options when the time of day and weather make travel more difficult. This is a common situation for elderly drivers who do not want to drive when it is snowy or is dark outside.

Knowledge and Information – What difficulties are there in obtaining information about services offered, routes and schedules, or arranging trips? This would include telephone-based services, websites on the internet and signage and maps, including information at transfer centers.

- Seniors and/or people with disabilities do not know about the full range of transportation options available to them until they face the need to find travel alternatives when their access to car trips is interrupted. Information on the full range of alternative modes, including transit, paratransit, and community-based services, can be difficult to find or confusing, especially when seniors initially realize that they need transport alternatives.
• Providers agreed that in the case of weather or emergency related events information distribution that is timely and accurate is problematic. Each provider had a different strategy to address this issue. There is no one uniform place to find information.

• Paratransit providers agreed that many of their clients do not use computers or smart phones so that electronic notification is not always feasible.

Pedestrian Access to Destinations and Transit – Are amenities missing that prevent or hinder people from traveling to and from transit stops, such as missing or damaged sidewalks, lack of curb ramps, etc.?

• Low density development and disconnected sidewalk networks provide challenges to operating transportation services. Sidewalks on only one side of the street or inability to cross in a crosswalk were identified as barriers to safe travel.

• Amenities that need improved have often been identified but lack funding to build those improvements means that often times there is no timeline for these safety improvements.

• Snow removal ordinance only applies to public sidewalks and not private property. This can create mobility problems for pedestrians that regularly use sidewalks not deemed public.

• Redevelopments of sidewalks in brick are not user friendly for elderly or disabled individuals.

Service Duplication: Is there duplication of services in your area? How can it be reduced through coordination of administration or services?

• Recent coordination between fixed route providers (Lawrence Transit and KU on Wheels) has reduced the duplication of services. This successful process has led to the realized need to consider the duplication of T Lift services and KU on Wheels Jaylift services. When KU classes are in session, KU Jaylift is a duplicated service. Consideration is now being given by the University of Kansas Transit Commission to contract out these duplicated services with Lawrence Transit. This consideration has many important issues to overcome, including differences in service expectations for customers.

Worst Case Scenario: How would your agency transport clients without state or federal funding?

• Providers said that cuts to available state and federal funding would be devastating to their operations. Transportation services are integral to the social service component of their operations. Some providers said they would be forced to cut other services to maintain a base transportation service to continue to be able to successfully provide their other services to clients. This would include cutting transportation services that weren’t absolutely critical to their social service mission.
Others said they would have to cut services and a lower level of services would be available to the community. All providers agreed the character of the operation would change with reductions in funding.

- Providers acknowledged that a reduction in funding would most likely price consumers out of transportation. The private taxi alternative is not a financial option for most of their consumers. These individuals would be unable to get to and from work, medical appointments, grocery stores, and would be forced to rely on friends, family or neighbors to meet their most basic needs.

**CONSUMER INPUT SUMMARY**

During the week of March 7-11th, 2011 MPO staff took to the streets and rode alongside paratransit and human service consumers in regular daily service of the following transportation services: T-Lift, Independence Inc. and Douglas County Senior Services. MPO staff conducted personal interviews of consumers at Cottonwood Inc. Due to scheduling difficulty, MPO staff provided paper survey forms to Bert Nash staff to distribute and collect from their consumers.

MPO staff did not record identifying consumer information and will not identify individual consumers in this process. MPO staff designed a set list of questions to ask on the bus and thoughtfully asked follow up questions to clarify responses. The prepared questions are listed below:

- What available services do you use?
- Where do you go when you ride?
- Are there places you would like to go but cannot get to with the existing services?
- How frequently do you ride?
- What days of the week and what times of the day do you ride?
- How satisfied are you with existing services? (On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not at all satisfied and 10 being very satisfied)
- What ways could providers improve services?

Riders were supportive of the process the MPO staff was using to obtain rider input and liked the efforts that the MPO staff made to speak with them about their individual transit experiences. All riders who were able choose to participate in the short interview process.

Riders generally chose their service provider, first based on their qualification to use the service, and secondly by the ability of the service to get them where they need to go. Consumers who use multiple services generally used a secondary service only when their primary service was unable to provide the desired ride. Riders rely on the services to maintain their ability to function in the community. This includes their ability to get to and from: work, school, grocery and other shopping, hospital, doctor appointments, exercise classes, and other social functions. One paratransit passenger admitted that without the available service she would have to quit her job. This is just one example of how these passengers rely on the available paratransit services.
Consumers admitted that there were sometimes places they desired to go but could not get to on the existing services. These desired but un-served destinations were sometimes out of the providers’ service areas, but the more common situation that MPO staff heard during this survey was that a portion of the trip was outside of the providers operating hours, especially evenings and Sundays. These trips outside of the providers’ operating hours were generally social in nature and included community and church events. However, some included work shifts that varied. Passengers also acknowledged that in order to get to and from some of these destinations they are required to rely on friends, family and neighbors and in what they referred to as worst case scenario a private taxi service. Those taxi services are viewed as the worst case scenario due to their expense to the consumer. Most of the demands for evening service would be met by evening service that ended at 9:00 PM, some if not all days of the week.

A majority of passengers that MPO staff spoke with ride a majority of the days providers operate their services. A majority of the rides they individually have scheduled are subscription or reoccurring rides.

On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being not at all satisfied and 10 being very satisfied riders were generally very satisfied with the services being provided. The most common rating from riders was a 10.

Consumers’ comments on paratransit services

Riders had the following ideas about how providers could improve paratransit and human services transportation. These comments are listed in order of frequency heard, with the most frequent requests at the top of the list.

- **Evening Service** - The demands for evening service would be met by evening service that ended at 9:00 p.m., some if not all days of the week. One rider even suggested increasing user fees to pay for increased service.

- **Weekend Service** - Particularly on Sunday to allow trips to church services.

- **Passengers of T-Lift services** acknowledged there needs to be more locations to purchase and pick up passes. The ability to subscribe to subscription pass purchase would be helpful and would save a roundtrip every month to pick up a new pass. This service would be especially helpful if these subscription or alternative options included receiving the pass by mail at home or at their workplace. One passenger said her employer offered an automatic pass program mailed to her monthly and her employer deducts the value of the pass out of her pretax wages. Other passengers that overheard this benefit were inquiring about the possibility of having a similar service they could use.

- **Improve driver communication**, particularly in notifying consumers who are visually impaired so they can know when their stop has arrived.

- **Shorter pickup window.**
• Driver nametags
• Heated seats

Consumers’ comments on Fixed route services

Riders had the following ideas about how providers could improve fixed route transit services in Lawrence. These comments are listed in order of frequency heard, with the most frequent requests at the top of the list.

• Greater frequency.
• Sunday service.
• More bicycle racks/space on buses.
• Updates of route information posted at shelters for individuals without access to the internet.
VISION AND GOALS

The following vision, goals and strategies will be used to guide the work of the Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC) in formulating and recommending improvements to specialty transit services in Douglas County and coordinating those special services better with mainline fixed route urban and commuter services.

VISION

Transportation providers, purchasers, riders, and the community at large will work together for mutual benefit to expand and improve transportation choices to address the unmet mobility needs of people who require transportation alternatives.

GOALS

Goal 1: Improve the coordination of public transit and human services transportation to maximize the efficient and effective use of funding.

Strategy 1.1: Providers will match the needs of riders with the most appropriate transportation choices so that dollars are effectively and efficiently applied to needs.

Strategy 1.2: Reduce duplication of services.

Strategy 1.3: Improve existing informal coordination between service providers.

Strategy 1.4 Douglas County providers will match rider’s needs to best available services based on rider referral to best prevent ride denials.

Strategy 1.5 Identify vehicles that are available and/or underutilized.

Strategy 1.6 Schedule regular discussions of equipment issues at RTAC meetings

Goal 2: Providers and CTD #1 will (with MPO, KDOT and FTA assistance) establish an education and training program to ensure that the community at large is aware of their transportation options.

Strategy 2.1: Partner to develop an online up to date resource for transit and paratransit information including descriptions about how to arrange rides on each service.

Strategy 2.2: Improve access to passes and schedule information.

Strategy 2.3 Offer training classes to train users about “How to get where you need to go.”

Strategy 2.4 Providers will develop a marketing campaign to share successful rider stories.

Goal 3: Work to facilitate and improve regional coordination opportunities with providers throughout the region and to coordinate available transportation alternatives.
Strategy 3.1: Encourage and facilitate coordination among all providers in the CTD #1 including providers based in Douglas County and other providers based in the KC Metro Area.

Strategy 3.2: Contact providers in the CTD #2 and the Shawnee County Paratransit Council to facilitate coordination with providers in the Capitol Area.

Goal 4: Encourage local governments to improve amenities and publications (e.g., shelters, stops, service maps and schedules, pass sales, signage, transfer points, ramps and sidewalks) to promote accessibility and mobility.

Strategy 4.1: Encourage city governments to identify sidewalk gaps near transit stops and alleviate those gaps.

Strategy 4.2: Encourage local governments to work with the RTAC and providers to develop road projects that consider transit and paratransit in their design.

Strategy 4.3: Develop an effective communication process for getting the CTD #1 and RTAC concerns into the MPO and local government transportation planning and project development processes.

Goal 5: Promote land use and urban design plans and standards that support transportation alternatives and include transit friendly facilities, such as: shelters, stops, transfer points, ramps, sidewalks, and lighting.

Strategy 5.1: Encourage local planners, engineers, and developers to plan for multimodal transportation.

Strategy 5.2: Encourage coordination between local land use plans, and comprehensive plans with the CPT-HSTP.

Goal 6: Providers will encourage MPO staff to incorporate the CPT-HSTP recommendations and policies into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), and to coordinate the development of MTP updates with the CPT-HSTP and vice versa.

Strategy 6.1 Providers will form and participate in an ongoing process and permanent advisory group (Regional Transit Advisory Committee) to ensure that the CPT-HSTP and related documents expressing policies for transit are reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Strategy 6.2 MPO staff will work with providers to review and update the CPT-HSTP in conjunction with the MTP update process and preferably before the MTP update is drafted.
THINGS THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR IMPLEMENTATION NOW AS A RESULT OF THIS CPT-HSTP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

• Regularly scheduled fall and spring RTAC meetings should be held, to ensure continued communication between providers. Annually follow-up on where the goals and strategies stand and track progress of work through an annual summary.

• The RTAC should create a collection of copies of all the maps and documents provided to human services clients.

• The RTAC should create a comprehensive directory of available community transportation services for residents and human service agencies. Ideally, the centralized information will be available in multiple formats, including web-based and paper.

• Providers should educate themselves about all the current and existing services available in the community to best match their clients to available services.

• Development and drafting of rider stories for marketing (e.g., users of transit, paratransit, and/or bicycles to get around town and gain social freedom or economic stability) should be completed by providers, reviewed by the RTAC, and distributed.

• Ask all operators and KDOT staff about common mechanical problems and provide information to KDOT so they can evaluate those problems in drafting the next state vehicle purchase contract, and submit paratransit provider information about those common vehicle problems to the manufacturers so they can improve equipment dependability.

• Ask all transit operators and KDOT public transit staff to share a continuity of operations, emergency operations plans and contact lists for emergency management.

WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE SHORT TERM? (NEXT 5 YEARS)

The present unsure nature of funding for services makes planning further than 1-2 years into the future more uncertain and difficult than it was just a few years ago. However, there are some low-cost things that the transit providers in Douglas County can do in the short-term to improve transit planning and services.

• The RTAC should develop a training program that focuses on mobility options other than personal automobile for students, low-income, homeless, ADA, etc.

• The RTAC should create and maintain a list of vehicles and financial resources that fund the operations, capital projects and maintenance of the services from each provider.
Providers are doing the best they can with the resources provided to meet the growing demand for services with existing services. The development of a comprehensive online and text resource of the available community resources appears to be the most visible improvement providers could make for clients and future clients. The growing need for paratransit services is expected to place increased burdens on the providers in Douglas County. The work in Lawrence and Douglas County to attract retirees adds to the projected growing demand for services. However, these services cannot be provided without additional sources of funding.

During the CPT-HSTP planning process, staff found the existing informal coordination between providers to be working sufficiently. With the limits of administrative ability, staff time, and funding resources, the operations are running efficiently. Without additional funding, resources the ability for existing providers to expand or improve services is limited. Providers are doing the best they can with the resources provided to meet the growing demand for services with existing services. The development of a comprehensive online and text resource of the available community resources appears to be the most visible improvement providers could make for clients and future clients.

**WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE LONG TERM? (NEXT 5-20 YEARS)**

The extreme uncertainty of funding sources out 5-20 years provides a difficult nature for long-range planning. The RTAC should therefore continue to update this plan and add action steps as they become relevant in the programming process. This is a key reason that the continued communication of this group is important and valuable.

- The RTAC should thoroughly review local development codes and then recommend changes to those development codes that address the concerns of transit and paratransit operators and riders.

**CONCLUSION**

The RTAC should contact the providers in CTD #2 and the Shawnee County Paratransit Council to facilitate coordination with providers in the Capitol Area.

- **RTAC members will coordinate with planning partners and other governing bodies on behalf of RTAC providers and policies in order to carryout plan goals.**

- The RTAC should participate in the planning processes to develop the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

- The RTAC should voice their support for local government efforts in Douglas County to adopt a Complete Streets Policies and support projects implementing those policies. The RTAC should also consider supporting state government efforts that may occur to develop a Complete Streets Policy for KDOT and other state agencies.
development of this resource will be the most valuable improvement that can be made with the existing limited resources.

This process has provided value to all of the providers who have participated. Each provider learning more about the other services in the community and continuing to develop the working relationship they have with each other has been valuable to the staffs of those agencies and should help in the informal inter-agency coordination efforts already underway to get paratransit clients to where they need to go. These experiences and relationships will be important to keep working together towards the goals laid out in this plan.

It is important to remember that providers will only be able to meet the needs when adequate funding is available for vehicle acquisition, replacement, maintenance and operations. Providers are committed to continuing to develop ways to work together to make paratransit and human services transportation a valuable resource for Lawrence and Douglas County.
Appendix A: Meeting Attendance

Participation in this process was key to developing the plan. Attendance records are included to display the provider’s involvement in developing the plan. The RTAC was formally created on June 16th, 2011 as a result of the CPT-HSTP process.

Douglas County CPT-HSTP Meeting Attendance Sheet

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Lawrence - Douglas County Metropolitan Planning Organization - L-DC MPO Regional Transit Advisory Committee (RTAC) Attendance

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