REGIONAL TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (RTAC)
Minutes for Monday October 21, 2013 Meeting

VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:
Robert Nugent (Lawrence Transit Administrator)
Carrie Lindsey (Lawrence-Douglas County Housing Authority)
LaNeece Jardon (Independence Inc.)
Heather Thies (Cottonwood Inc.)
Tina Roberts (Douglas County Senior Services)
Danny Kaiser (University of Kansas)

NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:
Scott Lien (KDOT)

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

OTHER:
Terry Berner, Douglas County Senior Services-Transportation Coordinator

1. Call to Order and Introductions – Carrie Lindsey called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM, a quorum was present and introductions were made.

2. Action Item: Approval of Minutes from the April 23, 2013 Meeting
Carrie Lindsey asked if anyone had any changes to the minutes, no changes were requested. Danny Kaiser made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Bob Nugent, the motion passed 5-0 with one abstention.

3. Discussion Item: Multimodal Studies & Transit Center Location Analysis Study Updates
Jessica Mortinger told the RTAC that the Multimodal Studies Project had their second and final Open House. The online survey and mobile meetings are also wrapping up within the week. The MPO staff will be awaiting the draft plans to share with this committee for review. Tina Roberts, Danny Kaiser and Bob Nugent have varying roles on the steering committees.

Bob Nugent informed the RTAC that the work on the Transit Center Location Analysis study is ongoing and the process had identified three locations that were presented to the Lawrence City Commission. The City Commission then chose only one location to focus on, and hearing that the PTAC and KU officials felt that the Commission’s decision was premature and wrote letters asking the City to consider other locations. Since the study team has been working on negotiations with KU through their master planning process on the feasibility of a KU endowment owned property between 19th and 21st on the east side of Iowa for a permanent transit home base within Lawrence to invest in infrastructure. The Lawrence Transit temporary downtown stop location on the 700 block of Vermont will expire on August 2014.

The location at 9th and Iowa that the City Commission focused on is for now still on the table. The timeframe for a decision on the hub location is tight because of the public involvement process required to change the routes. Changes need to be drafted by December, public involvement through February, and the new route structure in place and ready to roll out on the streets by August.

4. Discussion Item: Coordinated Transportation and Emergency Response
Bob Nugent shared the recent efforts to revise the Emergency Response plan for all disasters. The plan organizers are asking for a single go to contact for transportation coordination. Bob Nugent indicated that he is the preliminary contact for this position. The efforts to create the plan require an inventory of provider resources that are available throughout the county and contacts for each organization. RTAC could serve as the group to facilitate the collection of this information. After some discussion it was decided that the MPO staff would coordinate with Mr. Nugent to create a revised survey of organization assets to put together a database for information and contacts. RTAC members will participate and share their information and existing plans as available. Scott Lien also mentioned that KDOT has existing plans and they are housed with Pat Weaver at the Transportation Research Institute. It was agreed the committee will continue to work with MPO staff and Mr. Nugent on this issue.

5. Discussion Item: Provider Updates

Carrie Lindsey shared that her agency has one less van that is not currently planned to be replaced. They recently haven’t had any funds to buy passes for transit and coordinated with the Shelter to receive some of their passes. Ms. Lindsey will mark those passes with a Housing Authority stamp so they can be tracked.

Todd Girdler indicated that the MPO staff has been working on the Multimodal studies, participating on the I-70 Commuter Bus Study, and coordinating on the Transit Center Location Analysis. The plans for 2014 include a process to write and develop a pedestrian plan. As part of that effort the MPO staff would like to get comments about the sidewalk environment from the RTAC members and their clients.

Danny Kaiser indicated that KU is working with Lawrence Transit through their current RFP coordination and contract negotiations. The new contract will start January 1st and it is a 5 year contract.

LaNeece Jardon shared that Independence Inc. is now down on driving staff. They received their new passenger bus and have been working to get certified as a Medicare provider. They have also welcomed a new executive director Joan LaBelle.

Tina Roberts indicated that DCSS is purchasing a minivan for their volunteer driven service into Baldwin City. The service operations in Douglas County and also travels to Ottawa.

Heather Thies indicated that their train the trainer has hosted some recent sessions and they have included other agencies. She also told the group that the federal sequestration is hurting Cottonwood as the contract orders they have for cargo straps has declined as funding tightens.

Jessica Mortinger asked MPO providers to provide notification for grant letters of support as soon as possible.

Bob Nugent indicated that the City and KU are currently coordinating an effort to conduct passenger surveys on the K-10 Connector. The City of Lawrence has currently indicated they are not going to participate in funding the system unless KU and Johnson County Community College do so also. These origin and destination passenger surveys will be more extensive than anything previously conducted to explore the impacts of the service on KU students and residents in Lawrence.
Bob Nugent noted that through the contract negotiations currently ongoing for service providers there will be a discussion to include a maintenance opportunity for other agency vehicles. Currently the request is to have specialized equipment (lifts, drive trail, and consultation) maintenance ability. Scott Lien indicated that many providers have challenges with air conditioner maintenance and repair in their service vehicles.

Bob Nugent noted that Lawrence Transit is now selling their passes at local Hy-Vee and Dillon’s grocery stores. This will transition the Lawrence Transit offices to being a sales office for groups and agency passes only beginning in January.

Bob Nugent noted that the Nightline service is continuing to grow and some additional service has been added by coordinating other services. The service has a few hours that are consistently over capacity. The project is still being evaluated. Mr. Nugent also noted that Lawrence Transit responded to the increase demand for capacity on their flex line for the Mother Earth News fair by adding a larger vehicle to the route. This resulted in 500 trips on the service from the Flex Zone service area.

6. Other Business
Terry Berner asked if any other providers had a statement of compliance for ADA or a policy for conceal carry that they would share. Heather Thies indicated she would share their policy.

Jessica Mortinger indicated that she had invited Brian from GTI Inc. to join RTAC as a private sector provider based on a recommendation from Tina Roberts. Brian indicated he might try to attend.

7. Public Comments - No public comments.

8. Next Meeting - The next meeting will be scheduled and held in late the first two weeks of December. MPO staff will poll members for the best available time to meet. The meeting was adjourned at 2:23 PM.