

**Transit/Pedestrian Accessibility Study**  
**Steering Committee Meeting Notes**  
**April 5, 2013**  
**10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

The project is split into three (3) steering committees: Fixed Route Transit and Pedestrian Accessibility; Commuter Park and Ride; and, Countywide Bikeway System Plan (Toole Design). Each committee will meet 3-4 times. The public involvement will be conducted by Vireo, Toole and URS. The draft study is slated for October 2013 with final project completion at the end of 2013.

Jim Meyer presented the Gantt chart schedule and a Powerpoint slideshow.

The Transit/Pedestrian Accessibility Study aims to tackle the main obstacles to Fixed-Route transit accessibility.

The point of today's meeting is to discuss these obstacles. The project team took photos of various areas reflecting community concerns, e.g. poor sidewalks. Additionally, a survey was sent out to committee members about one week ago. Jim summarized the results. While not statistically valid, these results reflect initial feedback outlining salient concerns and project priorities, as follow:

1. Enhanced fixed-route bus stops
2. Real time signage and hard signs/way-finding
3. Improved sidewalks, e.g. making curb ramps compatible with bus shelters and bus stops
4. Coordinating improvements to street crossings with transit stops, and
5. Adding park-n-ride facilities to select transit stops where necessary.

The consultant team then opened up the discussion to comments from the committee to help us set the vision for this study. Committee members had the following comments:

- Constraint: sidewalks are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner.
- The group requested a copy of the Powerpoint presentation be sent by email to the members of the group.
- Improvements to the physical elements needs to be discussed more. LOS has been discussed somewhat.
- While bus shelters are desirable, a greater problem is that people have problems finding the bus stops; could you improve not necessarily real-time signage but hard and way-finding signs? Currently, there are signs aimed at the drivers (car-oriented), such as signs identifying and requesting that cars not park at the bus stop, but more signs are needed, aimed at the transit user (pedestrian-oriented).
- More commuter parking and linkages to fixed route system are desirable.
- Address barriers, e.g. snow and ice damages the concrete on the sidewalk, which become uneven, with gaps greater than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch. This especially affects pedestrians with special needs (e.g., wheelchairs, balance problems). This creates a circular pattern which affects

system use, e.g. people don't take the bus which results in reduced service which results in less people taking the bus.

- To what degree does the physical condition affect the decision to take the bus? What areas could we focus on to encourage more bus ridership?
- In many instances, crosswalks or sidewalks are missing. Riders then are required to walk alongside vehicles or along roadways to get where they are going. Jaywalking can be a problem when the stop is located mid-block rather than at an intersection. Recommendation: Either move bus stop to a signalized intersection where possible, or add signalized crosswalks where warranted.
- A related problem is that there is no way to get from some bus stops to many businesses, especially at medical complexes (e.g., have to cut through the grass or travel sidewalks that lead to the back of the building rather than the front). "You can get there but you can't get there." Buildings need a dedicated pedestrian entrances and paths leading to building frontages. The South Lawrence Wal-Mart is not bad, but it needs a crosswalk.
- Lawrence has been slowly improving situation particularly in last three years, but difficult when a lot of things were designed long ago.
- Difficult even to walk on sidewalks for a healthy person (e.g., herringbone brick sidewalks). Gap standards have been reduced even further since 2010 to ½ inch. Bicycles ride the streets because of this.
- Dillon's on 23rd bus stop one of the worst (goat path).
- Policy question: in Kansas, sidewalk improvements are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. The project should identify key strategic areas where we as the city can invest in. Currently, there are no CDBG funds that can be used, although they have been used in the past for spot locations. While the city might invest in the creation of new sidewalks, currently maintenance goes to the property owner. There is a need to identify the trip hazards throughout the system and assure ADA accessibility, especially during major repairs. For minor repairs, there is currently some leeway on ADA accessibility requirements.
- Group would like recommendations on tools and policies that would help implement.
- The city has not had the intestinal fortitude to pursue property owners improving their sidewalks. Impossible to replace all sidewalks that's DOA, so prioritizing spot locations is desired outcome.
- The city has been pretty good about pouring new sidewalks when they do roadway improvements.

The consultant team then added the following comments:

- Although looking at three studies, the URS team will return with one coordinated study that looks at the relationship between pedestrians, bicycles and transit.
- What is our plan for assessing these conditions:
  1. GIS data, particularly around bus stop areas then recommendations.
  2. After identifying priority areas, do visual inspection and come up with recommendations for committee.
- Open question: What level of specificity related to physical improvements will we present vs. looking also at policies?

Our goal is to provide a blueprint and priorities for locations and create pilot areas to showcase implementability elsewhere.

Jim showed online interactive mapping that Toole has developed mainly for bikes but can use for this application as well. Hoping to go live in about two weeks.

Committee members had the following comments/questions about this map tool:

- Can this accommodate visually impaired? Response: The website is a public involvement tool and will be used during meetings to help those with visual impairments with their feedback responses. iPads can be used during the mobile meetings.
- On wide streets, lights accommodate cars only. Sidewalks are poorly lit.
- The Billings/Crestline accessibility improvements, such as crosswalk timing and new shelters, are an example of desirable improvements elsewhere (Pilot project?).
- KU plans to develop an interactive accessibility map that they are hoping to improve to show say green, yellow, red routes depending on degree of accessibility.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Street improvements was a good pilot project success.
- Barrier with pedestrians trying to cross five lanes of traffic, even at signalized crossings that are meant more for traffic.

The consultant team and MPO staff then added the following comments:

- 
- We will be reaching out to paratransit users as well.
- Todd Girdler, MPO Staff: providing transit choices is the overarching goal for this study. These three studies really all boil down to choice.

Jim concluded the meeting noting that his team is looking at doing fieldwork soon and having another Steering Committee Meeting in early June with the first public meeting also during that week in June.

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
David Kocour	URS	<a href="mailto:David.kocour@urs.com">David.kocour@urs.com</a>	913-344-1058
Nalini Johnson	URS	<a href="mailto:Nalini.johnson@urs.com">Nalini.johnson@urs.com</a>	913.344.1033
Tammy Bennett	City of Lawrence	<a href="mailto:tbennett@lawrenceks.org">tbennett@lawrenceks.org</a>	785-832-3133
Cory Davis	KDOT	<a href="mailto:coryd@ksdot.org">coryd@ksdot.org</a>	785-296-7984
Marian Hukle	Chair-PTAC	<a href="mailto:hukle@math.ku.edu">hukle@math.ku.edu</a>	785-424-3850
Dan Warner	City of Lawrence Planning	<a href="mailto:dwarner@lawrenceks.org">dwarner@lawrenceks.org</a>	785-832-3162
Bob Nugent	Lawrence Transit	<a href="mailto:rnugent@lawrenceks.org">rnugent@lawrenceks.org</a>	785-832-3464
Dot Nary	RTC/IL KU	<a href="mailto:dotn@ku.edu">dotn@ku.edu</a>	864-0631
Todd Girdler	L-DC MPO Staff	<a href="mailto:tgirdler@lawrenceks.org">tgirdler@lawrenceks.org</a>	832-3155

Jessica Morlinger	MPO	<a href="mailto:jmortinger@lawrenceks.org">jmortinger@lawrenceks.org</a>	832-3165
Danny Kaiser	KU Transit	<a href="mailto:dkaiser@ku.edu">dkaiser@ku.edu</a>	864-7445
Jamie Simpson	KU Accessibility	<a href="mailto:lloyd@ku.edu">lloyd@ku.edu</a>	864-3650
Tina Roberts	Douglas County Senior Services	<a href="mailto:tinar@sunflower.com">tinar@sunflower.com</a>	842-0543
Dan Meyers	URS	<a href="mailto:Dan.meyers@urs.com">Dan.meyers@urs.com</a>	612-839-9511
Jim Meyer	URS	<a href="mailto:Jim.meyer@urs.com">Jim.meyer@urs.com</a>	612-802-3725