

MINUTES OF THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Les Donovan at 8:30 A.M. on March 8, 2007 in Room 527-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:
Peggy Palmer- excused

Committee staff present:
Mike Corrigan, Revisors of Statutes
Maggie Breen, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:
R.E. "Tuck" Duncan, Executive Director, Kansas Public Transit Association
Jay Banasiak, General Manager, Wichita Transit

Others attending:
See attached list.

R.E. "Tuck" Duncan, Executive Director, Kansas Public Transit Association, introduced several officers of the organization who were present. Jay Banasiak, Vice Chair, and General Manager of Wichita Transit; Paul Faber, Secretary, with Heartspring of Wichita; Lisa Loeb, Chair, with Reno County Public Transport; Jaylyn Tucker, Treasurer, with Topeka Metro Transit. He also introduced Sharon Joseph who is on the advisory board of Topeka Transit. Members of the association break out into two categories, urban and rural. Public transit impacts everyone. As the price of gas goes up, more people are looking for public transportation. As they are participating in KDOT's long range planning, they are looking at what is called "smart growth"; the way you develop urban areas close to transit. In Colorado, they have just passed a tax increase for a 12 year program to extend light rail out in the Denver area which is to go up to Boulder. They have found, as they design where transit stations are going to be, all of a sudden it creates these new economic development opportunities for mixed use. They have retail and housing because people can get close to the transit to get into the city. A huge issue seen at the federal level is congestion on our highways. We are beginning to max out our roads. Whatever the solutions are going to be for long terms transportation planning, public transit needs to be considered. A number of transit systems now offer a Y5 access. With an aging baby boomer population, there will be more and more public transits usage in order to keep people in their homes. On the federal level, funds are earmarked yearly. In 2007, there were no funds earmarked for public transit but they are aggressively working with the Kansas delegation, who have been very supportive, to have funds earmarked in 2008.

Jay Banasiak, General Manager, Wichita Transit, said they weren't there to ask for money today. He wanted to give the committee a little idea of return on investments. He gave a power point presentation. ([Attachment 1](#))

There were several questions from the committee pertaining to the purchasing and servicing of vans, and the issue of many almost empty buses being seen throughout the day. Also, the differences in the needs and issues of the urban and rural areas were discussed. Regarding the empty buses throughout the day, Jaylyn Tucker likened the public transit system to water lines. Early in the day as people are showering and preparing for work, the lines are extremely busy. Then, throughout the day, while people are at work, the lines are much less busy. The same is true of the transit system. During the hours people are going and returning to work, the buses are filled. Senator Wilson had specific concerns regarding the Jo in the Kansas City area. He said he knows lots of people but doesn't know anyone who rides the Jo and he sees all of the empty buses and questions the wisdom of subsidizing something that isn't being utilized. Jaylyn said the Jo was a commuter system and they do park the buses during the day. She said that the Topeka area's ridership has increased in the last couple of years and she feels sure that it is increasing in the Kansas City area also, as it provides a lot of connection options with Kansas City Transit. Tuck agreed that the Jo has unique bi-state issues. He said they have started with some experimentation relative to fuel usage. He thinks the transit systems are going to be in the forefront in use of E85 or Hydrogen. Public transit is going to be a solution for use of the products on a local level.

Lisa Loeb stressed how important public transit is in smaller rural communities where they don't have cab service or other options.

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 a.m. The date of the next meeting is unknown at this time

Minutes for March 6, 7 and 8th were sent around to committee for any changes or corrections with the understanding they would be considered approved by noon on March 23rd if there were none. There were no changes.