

May 2007

Six months later--Smart Moves and the Regional Investment Fund after the light rail vote (See column 4)



Transit Calendar - 2007

May 3: RTA sponsors a lunch meeting with new KC Mayor and Council

May 8-24: Vision Metcalf Meetings (See column 2)

May 16: RTA Annual Meeting

May 22: RTA First Annual Golf Classic



Light Rail is on track at the ATA

RTA board members regularly contact ATA staff about implementing the light rail plan approved by voters in November. Since the first week after the election the ATA has been pursuing an aggressive strategy to assess the feasibility of the plan and then, if necessary, scale it back to something that can be built with the available money. The voter-approved plan counts on getting 50 percent federal funding for the project. To get in line for that funding the ATA has begun an "alternatives analysis" as part of the prescribed federal planning process. Of critical importance, federal money cannot be given if light rail jeopardizes the existing bus system. While the most strident light rail supporters want to see tracks on the ground yesterday, it's just not that simple. The ATA, along with the City Council and Mid-America Regional Council, are moving as fast as could be hoped.

Vision Metcalf Meetings

Whether you are a resident, business operator, property owner or interested person the City of Overland Park wants to hear from you about the future of Metcalf Avenue.

The **Vision Metcalf** study was authorized by the Overland Park City Council and will help shape the long-term future of this vital corridor. The council wants feedback from 6,000 people.

Six public meetings have been scheduled to begin May 8 and conclude May 24.

The meetings are set up by sectors along Metcalf. You can attend all or any of the meetings, which last from 6:30 to 9 p.m. Meeting dates, sectors and locations are:

- Tuesday, May 8, I-35 to 71st, at the Holiday Inn, 8787 Reeder (87th and U.S. 69 Highway);
- Wednesday, May 9, 71st to 87th St., Holiday Inn, 8787 Reeder;
- Thursday, May 10, 87th St. to 101st, Holiday Inn, 8787 Reeder;
- Tuesday, May 15, 101st to I-435, Sheraton Overland Park Hotel, 6100 College Boulevard (College and Lamar);
- Wednesday, May 16, I-435 to 123rd St., Sheraton Overland Park Hotel; and
- Thursday, May 24, entire corridor, Sheraton Overland Park Hotel.

Ideas for Metcalf may include a series of small villages; places for kids and young adults; greater use of public transportation, including a trolley; expanding bike/hike pathways; and a higher density appearance that is up to date and pedestrian-oriented.

For more information, contact Assistant City Manager Matt Jordan at 913/895-6110, or send him an email at matt.jordan@opkansas.org



June Newsletter

Review of the **RTA** Annual Meeting

Newsletter Editor: Janet Rogers

RTA Annual Meeting offers public an opportunity to weigh in on Light Rail

The **RTA** will hold its Annual Membership Meeting on Wednesday, May 16, 2007 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Muehlebach Tower of the Marriott Kansas City Downtown at 12th and Wyandotte. There will be a social hour with a cash bar beginning at 5:30 p.m. followed by a panel discussion on "Building Light Rail in Kansas City." The panel will include **Mokhtee Ahmad**, Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, **Ed Ford**, KCMO City Council and former KCATA Commissioner, **Jim Graebner**, Consultant with the Lomarado Group in Denver, **Mark Huffer**, General Manager of the KCATA, **Pete Levi**, President, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and **Tom Shrout**, Executive Director of Citizens for Modern Transit in St. Louis. The discussion will be moderated by **Steve Kraske** of The Kansas City Star and KCUR's "Up to Date" radio show. A question and answer session will be an important part of the discussion.

The Muehlebach Tower is served by MAX and ATA Routes 12, 25, 47 and 51. You can use the trip planner at www.kcata.org, or call the ATA at 816-221-0660 for help with planning your trip.

This event is free to paid members of the **RTA**, \$5 for non-**RTA** members in advance and \$10 at the door. Registration forms for the event can be found on the **RTA** website at www.kctransit.org, or call the **RTA** office at 816-471-6808 for more information.

Please join us to be informed about this important topic and find out how you can get involved in shaping the public discussion about light rail.

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Six months later--Smart Moves and the Regional Investment Fund after the light rail vote

The first generation of the Smart Moves Regional Transit Plan was developed between 2000 and 2005 in an effort to provide the Kansas City region its first detailed bistate transit vision. The plan was created through a partnership between the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Johnson County Transit, and Unified Government Transit and was the product of extensive public involvement and community support. While the plan was predominantly a bus-based service plan, Smart Moves also outlined potential commuter rail corridors and future light-rail opportunities.



In November, 2006 the light-rail vote in Kansas City, Missouri, confirmed the public's desire for viable, more intense transportation alternatives and articulated a new component for the region's transit vision.

In response to the light-rail vote, and in an effort to capitalize on other planning efforts underway around the region, the Smart Moves team has initiated an update to the Smart Moves plan. The plan update will be integrated and run parallel with the light-rail planning activities and will also provide an opportunity to identify new connections and services throughout the region. As an overarching objective, the plan update will continue to promote a regional context for future transit investment on both sides of the state line.

Public involvement and engagement will play a key role in helping to inform the update of the Smart Moves plan.

MARC has recently received a grant from the Federal Transit Administration to conduct the "Guide the Ride" initiative which will be used to help promote the public's involvement. The Guide-the-Ride project will consist of approximately 25 public engagement sessions around the region focused on local transit issues and needs and will help to ensure the Smart Moves Update reflects public opinions and desires. MARC hopes to roll out "Guide-the-Ride" public engagement sessions as early as this June.

Regional investment fund legislation continues to see activity as well. While Missouri legislation was originally adopted in spring of 2006, a legislative amendment is currently under consideration to confirm Missouri's ability to move forward independent of action in Kansas. The identical Missouri house and senate bills are SB 671 and HB 1009 respectively.

Thomas Gerend
 Assistant Director of Transportation
 Mid-America Regional Council

Please join us for the First Annual RTA Golf Tournament

The **RTA** hosts its First Annual Golf Tournament on Tuesday, May 22 with a 9:00 a.m. shotgun start at Swope Memorial Golf Course. The entry fee is \$500.00 per team, or \$150.00 per player. The entry fee includes lunch, 18 holes, cart and prizes for the top three places in two flights.

Registration and sponsorship opportunities can be found on the **RTA** website at www.kctransit.org. The deadline for sponsorship is May 1 and player registration deadline is May 8. For more information, please contact Greg Lever at the **RTA** office.



regional transit
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