Kansas City Region
Commuter Rail Study
Implementation Strategy

A Report To

MARC
Mid-America Regional Council

Submitted By
Washington, DC

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Implementation Strategy

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Implementation Strategy

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Introduction
The purpose of this report is to build on the analysis conducted in prior tasks, especially the *Detailed Corridor Analysis*, by prioritizing service implementation in various corridors and by charting actions that would (1) maintain the commuter rail option until the time is right, and (2) lead to service implementation when the decision is made to proceed. The balance of this report is organized as follows:

Prioritization of Corridors
Interim Steps "Maintaining the Commuter Rail Option"
General Implementation Steps “Making Commuter Rail Happen”
Federal Transit Administration New Starts Criteria
Implementation Factors/Plan of Action

Prioritization of Corridors

Recommended Prioritization and/or Phased Development of Feasible Corridors. If sufficient funding were available, service would be initiated on the three most feasible corridors simultaneously in order to realize the benefits of passenger rail service, including maximization of ridership at an early date and achievement of synergies with a more extensive passenger rail system. However, assuming the greater Kansas City region will be constrained fiscally, the need arises to prioritize corridor implementation.

Recommended prioritization and/or phased development of feasible corridors should be based on MARC’s strategic goals and regional policies, as well as upon FTA New Starts Criteria and coordination with FTA. Specifically, the consultant team believes the following factors should be considered in developing a recommended corridor prioritization:

1. Ridership;
2. Operating cost per corridor or per rider;
3. Capital cost per corridor or per rider;
4. New Starts Criteria data to the extent available;
5. Qualitative consideration of land use and
6. Consideration of MARC’s strategic goals.

Factors one through five were considered and communicated as findings in the *Detailed Corridor Analysis*. Those findings are summarized in the following table, originally presented in the *Detailed Corridor Analysis* report.

**Table 1**

**Corridor Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTA Criteria Related Study Measure</th>
<th>Mobility</th>
<th>Environmental and Other</th>
<th>Operating Efficiencies</th>
<th>Cost Effectiveness</th>
<th>Cost Effectiveness</th>
<th>Cost Effectiveness</th>
<th>Land Use and Other</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Speed (mph)</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>3,346</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>133.8</td>
<td>40,026</td>
<td>8.64</td>
<td>Outlet Mall</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Ridership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Cost per Passenger ($)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Cost ($ million)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subsidy per Passenger Round Trip</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunities or Barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Freight Conflicts Outside Terminal Area</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odessa-KC (Corridor D)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Hill-KC (Corridor E)</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>4,434</td>
<td>5.30</td>
<td>137.9</td>
<td>31,129</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>Special Events Service to Sports Complex</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence-KC (Corridor H)</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>2,238</td>
<td>9.17</td>
<td>112.0</td>
<td>50,071</td>
<td>12.98</td>
<td>Major University</td>
<td>Mixed High and Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Pleasant Hill-Kansas City (Corridor E) corridor ranks first in ridership and operating efficiency (operating cost per passenger) as well as in the cost effectiveness measures of capital cost per passenger and subsidy per passenger. It also offers potential opportunities of commuter rail service to events at the sports complex through the operation of special trains outside normal commuter hours. Notwithstanding having the highest capital cost and significant freight conflicts (which conflicts are reflected in recommended improvements and the capital cost estimate), the corridor is recommended as the first implementation priority.

The Odessa-Kansas City (Corridor D) corridor was second in all the above-mentioned criteria, except freight train conflicts where it is far and away the
most favorable. It is recommended as the second priority, however, should population growth in the corridor accelerate beyond the levels underlying the ridership forecast and should the region opt for a rail transit alternative to I-70, this corridor could overtake Corridor E in the region’s project prioritization.

Based upon current travel demand projections and anticipated operating results, the Lawrence-Kansas City (Corridor H) corridor is recommended as the third implementation priority.

Whether one, some or all of the corridors see the implementation of commuter rail, a time line for such endeavors can be impacted by a multitude of issues which may require that an interested party spend time and effort to maintain commuter rail as a viable option before the time comes to "make it happen." The following part of this report focuses on "keeping it an option" and the next on "making it happen." Both sections list specific components and examples of either approach.

**Interim Steps "Maintaining the Commuter Rail Option"**
There are steps that MARC and the region can take to maintain passenger rail service as a viable future transportation option. These are outlined below in terms of planning steps, railroad coordination and right-of-way preservation.

**Planning Steps**
Monitor and participate in other rail studies and projects to preserve commuter rail options and take advantage of opportunities.

Findings from this commuter rail study should be incorporated into the continually ongoing evaluation and analysis of the region’s long term traffic trends. Commuter rail can be an important part of many multi-modal alternatives in a regional transportation plan.

Furthermore, as each entity within the region implements its land use plan, those plans should be well-coordinated and integrated with the transportation plans so future land use will be supportive of rail transit as it develops into reality. What is probably most feasible is to allow for development of interim
park and ride lots where they eventually may be used as rail station parking lots. This would include concentrating future employment, housing, and services proximate to these areas in order to promote rail transit as a commuting alternative. Some communities may want to act to ensure that existing or potential station sites remain available for future rail service. Any construction or development involving or abutting railroad right-of-way should consider the possible future need for additional tracks to accommodate rail service, for example, when acquiring railroad property for highway projects or constructing highway overpasses over rail lines of interest.

Organizations and individuals should support increased state transit funding. The State’s participation in this area is relatively low, and increased transit involvement and funding would help set the stage for a meaningful state contribution to regional rail service when and if implemented. This could include discussing with the State the use of state and federal highway funds for the improvement of rail infrastructure for implementation of passenger rail service as has been done in Virginia and other states.

Keep commuter rail as part of the Long Term Transportation Improvement Plan, even if there are no immediate plans to implement service.

Consider developing bus transit service or even bus rapid transit (BRT) as a precursor to rail service. Examine potential rail station sites, and determine whether property can be used for transit, park and ride or some other compatible use to both reserve land for eventual rail use and develop transit use.

**Railroad Coordination**

Rail line use can change dramatically with the addition or loss of a major on-line freight customer or as a railroad company alters its network operations. The conditions and use described in this report may change enough to alter the prospects for implementing passenger rail service, thus it is recommended that MARC monitor the freight service, physical condition, ownership and future prospects of rail lines which constitute the potential rail passenger corridor. Specific actions may include:
• Maintain contact with officials of owning railroads, UP, BNSF, KCS and KCT, and periodically remind them of potential future interest in passenger service. Ask about any potential changes in the rail networks and facilities or major changes in service patterns that would materially affect the use and future of line segments of interest.

• Maintain a dialog with major regional rail freight shippers and receivers to keep abreast of rail service developments.

• Keep in contact with Amtrak’s local representative.

• Consider the degree of support for existing Amtrak service.
  − Amtrak’s presence helps keep passenger rail infrastructure intact on the Pleasant Hill Line and at Union Station.
  − Amtrak maintains public awareness of passenger rail.

• Consider instituting an annual rail update meeting, either at the staff level or by all or a subset of the Transportation Committee, at which local and state officials and others interested in rail transportation may exchange updates and projections.

• Consider arranging for a demonstration service at the time that re-examination identifies more favorable prospects for a passenger rail service. Amtrak often assists with limited demonstrations, and equipment vendors also might assist.

• Follow rail and transit developments in similar communities through the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), conferences, trade press and reciprocal visits.

**Right-of-Way Preservation**

MARC should monitor the status of rail lines in its service area and take actions necessary to maintain rights-of-way that might one day be useful in instituting regional rail or other transportation services. Active rail lines may
be abandoned only with the consent of the Surface Transportation Board (STB). Prior to filing an abandonment application with the STB, the owning railroad is required to publish notice of intent to abandon in general circulation newspapers in each affected county and to notify the state agency responsible for rail planning. MARC should work with KDOT and MoDOT to review any abandonments in its area of interest. Maintaining a close working relationship with the railroads however, as described above, is an even better way to ensure that MARC and its constituents have an opportunity to preserve rail lines of interest. MARC also should consider ahead of time whether it has the charter and means to acquire rights-of-way, or whether there are other public or non-profit entities that would be interested in working together to save key tracks or right-of-way segments.

At this writing, it seems unlikely that any of the three rail lines best suited for commuter rail service will be abandoned in their entirety, although if KCS is acquired or merges with another carrier, status of the Odessa line should be monitored. Segments, spurs and connections, however, could be a different matter as operating patterns and use of tracks changes, as has occurred in the vicinity of Kansas City Union Station. Not all changes of that nature would constitute abandonments that trigger the STB abandonment process, thus making the working relationship with the railroads all the more important.

**General Implementation Steps "Making Commuter Rail Happen"**

There is a good possibility that at some time the region will opt to implement commuter rail service. The following steps chart the path from study to start-up:

- Feasibility Planning (the current step: this study)
- Corridor Study
- Decision Regarding Implementation (Funding and Governance)
- Railroad Negotiations
- Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Environmental Assessment
- Final Engineering/Design, Construction and Equipment Acquisition
- Testing of Equipment and Training of Staff
- Revenue Operation
Each of these steps is discussed, in turn, in the following paragraphs.

**Feasibility Planning (The Current Step: This Study)**
This Kansas City Region Commuter Rail Study results in a recommended prioritization of feasible corridors, based upon a comprehensive consideration of all relevant factors that determine feasibility.

**Major Corridor Study**
This study examined commuter rail’s feasibility in the region and identified the most viable corridors. The next step in implementation planning is a transportation corridor study (or “alternatives analysis”), that evaluates all potential transportation solutions within a specified corridor and identifies the most desirable mix of improvements. The corridor study establishes a baseline alternative and then examines the transportation benefits of various projects as well as their costs and the community and environmental impacts and compares them to the baseline alternative. The study would include a substantial public participation component so that public input would be part of identifying and defining alternatives as well as in making the final selection of a locally preferred alternative. Quantitative findings with respect to the New Starts criteria should be developed by the study in order to support a subsequent request for FTA funding of Preliminary Engineering. Close coordination with the FTA Region 7 office in Kansas City is recommended throughout the corridor study.

**Decision Regarding Implementation (Funding, and Governance)**
The next step following completion of the corridor study is a series of decisions that must be made by MARC, perhaps in coordination with other regional government entities, regarding whether and how to proceed. This decision involves funding, interjurisdictional relationships and governance (the responsibilities of the political entities in Kansas and Missouri that comprise the organization sponsoring commuter rail) and should identify at least the overall
framework regarding how the commuter rail operation is to be managed. This decision involves issues related to all Task 5 factors listed in the Implementation Factors/Plan of Action section of this report but especially financial planning, interjurisdictional service issues such as cost and revenue allocations and institutional arrangements/governance.

Specific issues to be addressed in this decision step include:

- Funding
- Institutional Arrangements
- Management of the service (marketing, funding and administration);
- Construction of right of way improvements and stations;
- Maintenance of right of way (if owned by the commuter rail agency);
- Acquisition of rolling stock;
- Maintenance of rolling stock;
- Cleaning of rolling stock;
- Dispatching;
- Maintenance and cleaning of stations and
- Operation of the service.

Approximately six months are estimated to complete this decision step. It is assumed that funding may be secured within the time estimated for this and the next step (railroad negotiations), that is, one to two years.

**Railroad Negotiations**

Once the decision is made to implement the service, funding is arranged, and a governing structure is established, it is appropriate to enter into negotiations with the owning railroad to develop an agreement regarding the intended use of the railroad’s property.

It is strongly recommended that if possible a passenger service access agreement with the railroad be consummated prior to commitment of funds for
preliminary engineering, construction and equipment acquisition. Failure to do so may significantly weaken negotiating leverage with the railroad. It may not be possible to obtain an early access agreement due to the potential reluctance on the host railroad’s part to make a commitment prior to working out detailed service and infrastructure arrangements which are usually addressed in Preliminary Engineering, potentially including computer operations simulations. This chicken-and-egg question is one of the challenging aspects of service implementation and will have to be worked out by the service sponsor and the host railroad, with coordination with FTA regarding compliance with the New Starts process if FTA funding is contemplated.

It is difficult to attach a time range to this step, given that negotiations will depend upon the interest of the freight railroads and other matters. For purposes of preparing an approximate schedule, negotiations with the railroad(s) may take a half to one and a half years.

**Preliminary Engineering (PE) and Environmental Assessment**

Preliminary engineering is performed to provide the drawings and specifications required to refine design and more precisely estimate cost. It may also be decided to include preparation of drawings and specifications suitable for construction and rolling stock acquisition, in other words, bid packages.

Preliminary engineering should determine the site-specific requirements associated with parking and station access. If station design and construction are to be the responsibility of the jurisdictions in which the stations are located (a decision that should be made at the onset of PE), it is appropriate at the outset of this step to make decisions regarding which entities are responsible for individual stations and to establish certain common criteria for all stations.

Equipment standards and then specifications should be developed in PE. As preliminary engineering advances, project parameters should be well enough defined to make general decisions about equipment, canvass new and used equipment markets as applicable, and develop specifications suitable to solicit bids.
About a year is required for preliminary engineering, including time required to advertise for consultant selection. Environment assessment and permitting may require one to one and a half years and should be accomplished concurrently with engineering/design.

**Final Engineering Design, Construction and Equipment Acquisition**

In this step, at least 18 months should be allowed for equipment procurement from the time a contract is awarded and 24 months would be a more conservative allowance. With specialized or unique equipment, this process could require two years or more. Simple station construction may consume as little as six months, but time must be added for all the various permitting processes related to construction of parking at stations, if sufficient parking does not exist already. Similarly, permitting could delay right of way and track work if environmental and permitting issues are not resolved within the previous step. While the entire Final Engineering Design, Construction and Equipment Acquisition process could consume up to three years, two years is possible in the absence of permitting problems.

**Testing of Equipment, Training of Staff and Marketing the Service**

These actions may be performed as part of the previous step, but are mentioned as a separate item so that their importance will not be forgotten.

**Revenue Operation**

Revenue operation (commencement of the commuter rail service) may follow completion of the above steps, which, after this study or from the time that a subsequent go-ahead decision is made, may require between three and a half to six and a half years.
Federal Transit Administration New Starts Criteria

In the previously submitted *Initial Corridor Screening and Detailed Corridor Analysis* reports, tasks 3 and 4, respectively Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts Criteria were utilized in a general manner, consistent with the level of detail appropriate in a feasibility study, to facilitate screening. New Start criteria were utilized since it is assumed that federal funding will be sought in the event that the greater Kansas City region elects to implement commuter rail service. If federal funding is to be sought, it will be very important to understand and guide the region’s actions by the "ground rules" in applying for FTA new starts funding.

The criteria recently published called "Measures Used for Project Evaluation"\(^1\) are used by FTA in evaluating candidate new starts projects and deciding which projects are to be funded. The criteria are listed as follows\(^2\):

- Mobility improvements;
- Environmental benefits;
- Operating efficiencies;
- Transportation system user benefits (cost-effectiveness);
- Existing land use, transit supportive land use policies, and future patterns and
- Other factors (e.g., multimodal emphasis, environmental justice, etc.).

Full development of these measures requires comparison of the proposed new start project with a *baseline alternative*. This must be decided between MARC and the FTA. Such measures must be defined and approved by FTA prior to submittal of a request to FTA to enter preliminary engineering.\(^3\) The baseline alternative or alternatively, “no build” should be discussed with the regional FTA office. It is the alternative against which the proposed new start project is compared to develop project justification measures. It should include transit

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3 "Major Capital Investment Projects; Final Rule", page 76883.
improvements lower in cost than the new start. This baseline alternative must be defined so that comparisons with the new start project isolate the costs and benefits of the major transit investment. The baseline alternative must be defined and approved by FTA prior to preliminary engineering. The baseline alternative includes in the project corridor(s) all reasonable cost-effective transit improvements short of investment in a new start project. There is no definition of what constitutes “investment in a new start project.” This must be decided between MARC and the FTA. Full development of the Measures Used for Project Evaluation also requires a detail of analysis—including evaluation of the costs and benefits of a major transit investment, which logically would be performed following in a corridor study prior to preliminary engineering.

Federal funding of new start projects has become highly competitive. If the greater Kansas City Region decides to compete for federal funding, the region not only must understand the FTA rules, but also should consider going beyond minimum compliance with the New Start rules and make the region more attractive than the competition. At the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Legislative Conference in Washington, DC, in March 2001, Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta said, with regard to new start projects: "[M]ake sure that they have all the local funding in place, and do anything else you can to keep the cost down, maximize the benefits, and keep the respective federal share reasonable". With regard to the last point, FTA informed conferees at the APTA New Starts Workshop on 2001, that even though it is possible to apply for 80 percent federal funding, most projects nowadays are for 50 percent federal funding in order to be competitive. Indeed, the Bush administration’s proposed budget calls for reducing the maximum federal share of capital projects from 80 to 50 percent. Headquarters FTA strongly recommends that new start sponsors talk to appropriate representatives in their respective regions. It is entirely appropriate and advisable that the greater Kansas City region coordinates the development

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of this project with its FTA regional office. (RLBA understands that MARC has been doing this.)

In summary, many of the important decisions with regard to implementation of this project should be based upon significant coordination with FTA and utilization of the FTA New Starts criteria.

**Implementation Factors**
This section discusses eight implementation factors listed below and, where applicable, makes specific recommendations.

- Financial planning, including operating and capital costs, sources of revenue and financial service options;
- Interjurisdictional service issues such as cost and revenue allocations between jurisdictions;
- Recommended institutional arrangements;
- Structural/infrastructure changes required;
- Equipment options;
- Coordination with freight rail service including by-pass strategies and capacity options;
- Modification to the multimodal feeder/distribution system and
- Land use policies and possible zoning changes based on practical examples.

**Financial Planning**
Funding is the indispensable and basic requirement for implementing commuter rail in the Kansas City region. The most common tool in recent years used to

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Mokhtee Ahmad is the Regional Administrator.
fund new commuter rail services or additions to existing services has been the FTA New Starts Program, which will be alluded to throughout this topic discussion. The parameters of future federal funding are uncertain until the TEA-21 program is reauthorized, which is due to occur in 2003. The US Department of Transportation is expected to draft its proposal for the reauthorization of the surface transportation program in the summer of 2002. Key target dates include September 2002, when the Administration's proposal is due at the Office of Management and Budget and January 2003, when the Administration expects to send its proposal to Congress. Despite the unknown form and extent of federal program participation under successor legislation, the New Starts Program structure remains the best-available program funding. It is expected that a New Starts program will be in the new authorizing legislation.

The most important thing which MARC can do at this point is to get a Congressional “earmark” inserted in the new authorizing legislation. If Kansas City commuter rail shows up as an authorized project in the next authorizing legislation, which is due in 2003, a big hurdle will have been crossed. Other jurisdictions all over the country are doing this. MARC should take this step promptly once a decision is made to proceed.

FTA will use the following measures to evaluate the local financial commitment to a proposed project: (a) the proposed share of project capital costs to be met using funds from sources other than the 49 U.S.C. 5309 new starts program, including both the local match required by Federal law and any additional capital funding (“overmatch”), (b) the stability and reliability of the proposed capital financing plan, and (c) the stability and reliability of the proposed operating financing plan to fund operation of the entire transit system as planned over a 20-year planning horizon. Because of the keenness of competition for funding under the new starts program, most states propose 50 percent as the Federal share, rather than 80 percent. However, long before

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grappling with the mechanics of developing a financial plan acceptable to FTA, the Kansas City region must confront the fundamental question of how to assemble its share (local match) of project costs.

Funding was addressed in two recent Kansas City region studies; both are briefly described here. Both papers are vital references on the subject of implementation strategy. Following that examination are examples of how other commuter rail services raised the necessary local funding and a brief description of how they are governed, which is appropriate to the discussion of institutional arrangements that appears later in this report.

**Transit Governance Study**

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) addressed the issue of funding, as well as other issues that would be important to commuter rail service implementation, in its July 2000 *Transit Governance Study Report* (*Governance Study*). The purpose of the *Governance Study*, was “to provide options to the KCATA Board of Commissioners concerning board membership, funding, operations, and planning, which it can consider and utilize in crafting a comprehensive, multi-modal regional transit plan”.

The *Governance Study* included analyses of seven peer cities—St. Louis, Minneapolis/St. Paul, San Diego, Houston, Denver, Seattle/Tacoma and Dallas—and states that fund transit through some type of regional tax: sales tax, property tax, fuel tax or a combination. The study concluded, among many other things, that the states of Kansas and Missouri must provide greater financial support to transit and that dedicated funding is needed to develop a comprehensive regional route system.

The *Governance Study* found that there “does not seem to be one system for organizing funding and providing transit servicing that has been universally adopted,” that many of “the peer cities have multiple transit providers ... and seamless operation ... appears to be a goal,” and that all peer cities “have transit funded by some type of regional tax. Kansas City is the only
metropolitan area studied where transit was funded primarily by contract with one City.”\textsuperscript{10} “Metro-wide funding for transit services must be addressed in order to provide a more extensive transit system.”\textsuperscript{11} That theme is repeated throughout the report. A principal conclusion of the \textit{Governance Study} is that all peer cities analyzed have “some type of regional tax” to fund transit, and the Governance Study states that the “biggest need for the region is a single, dedicated, regional funding source to assure a more extensive, uniformly distributed regional transit system.”\textsuperscript{12} Funding lessons learned from the seven model transit agencies in the peer cities include: the need for state leadership in financial support of transit; the importance of dedicated funding in development of a comprehensive regional system and the source of dedicated regional transit funding in other metropolitan areas being sales tax, property tax, fuel tax or a combination thereof.

Currently there is a regional effort being made in transportation planning referred to as Smart Moves. In the fall of 2002 Smart Moves is working to link the region by developing detailed transit service plan and will propose at least one regional finance plan.

\textbf{Transit Investment Strategy}

MARC addressed the issue of funding in its plan of action, \textit{Transit Investment Strategy: Action Plan for Expanded Federal, State and Local Funding (Transit Investment Strategy)}. MARC’s \textit{Transit Investment Strategy} stated that the Kansas City metropolitan area has one of the lowest levels of transit investment in the nation and that there is a need to do much more to increase transit resources. The paper recommends and describes a comprehensive action plan to seek federal, state and local funding to support an inter-jurisdictional system of regional and local transit services that includes a financing strategy and action plan.

\textsuperscript{9} Kansas City Area Transportation Authority “Transit Governance Study Report” (Governance Study), July 2000, page 1.
\textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{11} Governance Study, page 2.
Implementation Strategy

How Other Commuter Railroads Were Implemented

Also germane to the discussion of funding, as well as the overall implementation strategy including management of the service, is how other new start commuter railroads obtained their funding and established their governance mechanisms. This discussion is intentionally focussed on new start commuter railroads that appear to provide a more current and relevant view of today’s best operating practices and lowest cost operations.

Altamont Commuter Express (ACE), which operates between Stockton and San Jose, CA began service in 1998 to three counties and nine cities. It enjoys a dedicated funding source—a sales tax—resulting from a 1990 San Joaquin County referendum (Measure K). In addition funds are available from CMAQ and the three parent organizations, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC), the Alameda Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA), and the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) contribute operating subsidies. A nine-person board of directors—all elected officials—supervises ACE as the managing staff. Herzog Transit Services operates and maintains the service under contract.13

Coaster began service in 1995 in San Diego County, California, with the help of dedicated funding from a portion of a regional transportation sales tax. Governance is by a nine-person board of directors, all elected officials. Operation of the service is by contract.

Metrolink commuter rail service is governed by the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA), a joint powers agency and consortium of five southern California counties, constituted under California law with a primary mission to implement a regional commuter rail system. SCRRRA members are mostly elected officials (county supervisors, city mayors and city council members) and citizen members. Elected officials assist in raising funds both in

12 Governance Study, page 91.
Sacramento and Washington, D.C. An Executive Director and staff run day-to-day operations. Metrolink was initially funded by State of California rail bond measures approved by voters in 1990 and from County sales tax proceeds. Today Metrolink serves six counties. Current dedicated funding consists of sales taxes in four of the counties. Service began in October 1992, employing Amtrak as contract operator.

**Sounder** began commuter rail service to three counties in the Seattle-Tacoma region in 2000. Dedicated funding sources are a motor vehicle excise tax (0.4 percent) and a sales tax (0.3 percent). The board of directors has 18 members, 17 elected officials and the state department of transportation secretary. Half of each county’s members must serve on the local county transit board. Operation of the service is by contract with BNSF and track owners and Amtrak maintains the equipment.

**Tri-Rail**, which serves three counties in southern Florida, began service in 1989. It is not supported through dedicated funding sources. Funding is divided amongst the Federal Government, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), local counties and farebox revenues. The portion not covered by federal funds and farebox revenues is essentially split between the counties and FDOT. Governance is by a nine-member board of directors composed of three elected officials (county commissioners from the three counties), three business representatives (one from each county), two representatives from the governor and one representative from the Florida Department of Transportation. Operation of the service is by contract.

**Trinity Railway Express** (TRE) initiated commuter rail service in December 1996 and was jointly developed by the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (locally referred to as the T) and Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART). To join DART, cities must vote in favor of a state-collected one-cent sales tax. Fort Worth required ½ cent. Herzog Transit Services performs contract operation and

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14 Taube, “Introduction to Commuter Rail 2001: Organizational Structures and Governance: Data Sheets”.

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maintenance.\textsuperscript{15} TRE has a seven-member, non-elected advisory committee; DART has a 15-member, non-elected board of directors.

\textit{Virginia Railway Express} (VRE) was started (in June 1992) through creation of a new transportation district funded through a two percent gasoline tax, which more than covers the local share of the project of most participating jurisdictions.\textsuperscript{16} Organizationally, VRE operates as an unincorporated joint project between two different regional transportation commissions in Northern Virginia. The VRE Board of Directors is composed of five elected officials (county supervisors) and two non-elected members (one state official and one county transportation commission official) who make decisions regarding operation of the commuter rail service. Board members have been strong advocates of funding, often in competition with other demands and agencies.\textsuperscript{17} A staff headed by a Chief Operating Officer manages day-to-day operations and train operation is contracted to Amtrak.

\textbf{Peer System Observations/Recommendations}

Perhaps the most important lessons for the Kansas City region from the above review of new start commuter rail operations are that most of these successful services seem to be aided by 1) boards of directors composed mostly of local elected officials who are engaged in transportation issues and who are strong transportation advocates; and 2) a dedicated and reasonably adequate local funding source, based upon local and/or regional taxes (sales, gas, etc.). Indeed, these “lessons” are already manifested, in the Kansas City region, in the KCATA \textit{Governance Study} and the MARC \textit{Transit Investment Strategy} papers described above.

\textsuperscript{17} Taube, “Introduction to Commuter Rail 2001: Organizational Structures and Governance: Data Sheets”.
Current Sources of Revenue Supporting Existing Kansas City Regional Transit Services

KCATA is the bi-state transit authority that provides the majority of public transportation service in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Two local governments in the region, Johnson County Transit and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City also operate public transit services.

KCATA is financed through a combination of passenger fares, local sales taxes, federal funds and state funds; the agency does not benefit from a dedicated, region-wide funding base. The primary source of operating funds is from a dedicated, ½ cent sales tax levied only by the City of Kansas City, Missouri. Service is provided through an annual contract between the City and KCATA. KCATA also provides service through annual contracts with the cities of Independence, Gladstone, Riverside, Raytown, Liberty, Lee’s Summit, North Kansas City and Kansas City, Kansas. These cities pay for services with funds obtained from their general fund tax revenues and also receive Federal funds through CMAQ.

Under the compact which authorized the KCATA, it has the authority to charge and collect fees and rents for the use of facilities which it owns or operates; receive contributions or moneys for its lawful activities; borrow money for acquisition, planning, construction, operation and maintenance of any facility and issue negotiable refunding notes or bonds. KCATA does not enjoy taxing authority. However, Federal and state funds are distributed to KCATA as the designated recipient of FTA funds in the Kansas City region. KCATA has received $2.4 million in state aid in past years.

Johnson County, Kansas will receive $300,000 from Federal New Starts program funding to support its I-35 commuter rail program. The state of Kansas, under the Public Transportation Program, allocates $1.3 million annually to Johnson County for its transportation needs. Of the $1.3 million, Johnson County plans to set aside $500,000 per year towards the I-35 commuter rail program.
The Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas receives $500,000 annually in state funding for its transit operations.

**Prospective Funding Sources**

The Kansas City metropolitan area has one of the lowest levels of transit investment in the nation. MARC, in its titled *Transit Investment Strategy*, report, provided an action plan to expand federal, state and local funding of transit operations. The funding strategy included consolidation of federal earmark requests from the region; shared resources to coordinate transit lobbying efforts in Washington D.C., Topeka, Kansas and Jefferson City, Missouri and the pursuit of local funding initiatives ranging from continued funding at existing or increased levels to potential new funding initiatives.

The three basic revenue sources (federal, state and local) could be employed to cover projected capital costs as well as the continuing costs of commuter rail operation and maintenance in the Kansas City metropolitan region. These funding sources are, of course, anticipated to supplement fare-box revenue that is projected to be insufficient to fund ongoing operation costs.

**Federal Funding**

The Kansas City metropolitan region must both maximize its use of existing federal funds and pursue new federal funding. FTA has several major assistance programs for eligible activities through which it provides funding through legislative formulas or discretionary authority.

**Capital Investment Program (49 U.S.C. 5309)**

This program provides capital assistance of three preliminary activities: new and replacement buses and facilities, modernization of existing rail systems and new fixed guideway systems. The New Start program provides funds toward the construction of new fixed guideway systems. Projects become funding candidates under this program by successfully completing the appropriate steps in the major capital investment planning and project development process. FTA New Start evaluation criteria were previously addressed.
Urbanized Area Formula Program (49 U.S.C. 5307)
This program makes federal resources available to urbanized areas\(^{18}\) for transit capital and operating assistance and transportation-related planning. The program funds capital investments in new and fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles, tracks, signals, communications and computer hardware and software.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)
Objectives of this program is to improve the nation’s air quality and manage traffic congestion. CMAQ projects and programs are often innovative solutions to common mobility problems and are driven by Clean Air Act mandates to attain and maintain national ambient air quality standards. Eligible activities under CMAQ include transit system capital expansion and improvements projected to realize an increase in ridership and shared ride services.

The flexibility inherent in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act of the 21\(^{st}\) Century (TEA-21), allowed creative states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to employ various US Department of Transportation federal funding sources on behalf of rail projects. Thus federal funding can come from the following programs:

- Surface Transportation Program (STP);
- Rail-Highway Crossing Program (Section 130 program);
- Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program (RRIF) – This provides direct loans and loan guarantees to state and local governments and
- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) – This provides credit assistance on flexible terms directly to public-private sponsors of major surface transportation projects.

\(^{18}\) An urbanized area is an incorporated area with a population of 50,000 or more designated as such by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.
State Funding
The Kansas City region must work to ensure adequate funding of commuter rail service in both Missouri and Kansas. Both states should work to protect existing revenues, increase appropriations to transit and obtain new revenues to jump start commuter rail services in the region. The following enabling legislation could be used as sources of state revenue to fund a commuter rail system:

Missouri Statute 94.600
This legislation was authorized by the Missouri General Assembly in the mid-90’s primarily to provide a mechanism through which St. Louis City and County voters could provide annual operating assistance to the new St. Louis light rail system. It authorizes sales taxes in cities over 400,000 population, so as far as the scope of this study is concerned it is available to Kansas City, MO. It can be used only for transportation purposes.

Missouri Statute 94.577
This sales tax authorization was used in the failed November, 2000 light rail initiative petition. It could be used to support a wide range of the City’s capital needs, not just transportation. The tax can be applied in any city outside of St. Louis County and can range from 1/8 to 1/2 of a percent.

Transportation Development District
This special Missouri legislation was created primarily to allow creation of transportation development districts so that a sales tax could be levied within a district to pay for transportation improvements. It requires three separate votes to: 1) create the district; 2) elect a governing body and 3) levy the tax.

HB 1389
A statewide total transportation tax package to support all modes of transportation titled Missouri Statewide Transportation Funding was attempted in but failed in August of 2002.
Comprehensive Transportation Plan
In 1999, the Kansas Legislature enacted a 10-year Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) to plan, develop and operate various transportation modes in Kansas, including roads and highways, short line rail service, general aviation airports and public transportation. A primary assumption in financing the CTP was an accelerated transfer of sales tax revenue from the State General Fund to the State Highway Fund (not to be confused with the State Road Fund of Missouri). The program allocated $10 million annually to transportation needs throughout the state. Funds are administered through the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT).

HB 3011
Due to the budget problems in the State General Fund, the sales tax transfer to the State Highway Fund proposed in the 1999 CTP was eliminated in the recommended FY 2003 budget plan. The 2002 Legislature passed $46 million in new and dedicated revenue for the 1999 CTP. The revenue will replace the sales tax transfer in FY 2003. The Governor of Kansas indicated that in FY 2004, sales tax transfers would be reinstated if the budget allowed. Transportation funding of HB 3011 is through: 1) a two-cent motor fuels tax, effective July 1, 2002 and 2) an increase in registration fees on cars and trucks of 3 percent beginning July 1, 2002. The measures are expected to raise $46 million in dedicated money for the transportation program for FY 2003.

Local Funding
Authorized jurisdictions can enact sales, property or earnings taxes. Counties in both Missouri and Kansas can initiate a multi-county funding source by enacting a sales tax in their respective counties. However, these programs have to get the approval of the respective state legislature.

Corridor Capital Costs, Revenues and Operating Costs
In its financial planning, it is important that the commuter rail sponsor develop a financial plan that addresses both capital and operating costs. The capital cost component of the plan addresses the one-time capital expenditures required to initiate service and the operating cost component addresses the
required annual operating subsidy. Corridor capital costs, passenger revenues and operating cost estimates were developed and presented in the *Detailed Corridor Analysis* report and are summarized below.

### Table 2

**Passenger Revenue, Capital and Operating Cost Summary**

($ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Initial Capital Cost</th>
<th>Passenger Revenues</th>
<th>Operating Cost</th>
<th>Subsidy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>$2.35</td>
<td>$6.04</td>
<td>$3.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Pleasant Hill</td>
<td>141.5</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Lawrence</td>
<td>117.9</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>3.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Financial Service Options

Under the FTA New Starts process the commuter rail sponsor must prepare a financial service plan that addresses funding the initial capital costs and annual operating subsidy from the same or different funding sources. No matter what funding options are chosen, it is important that the selected option produce a steady and reliable long-term source of funds. A steady and reliable source of funding assures FTA that the local funding authority will be able to meet its financial obligations and maintain capital improvements to the proper standard, thus protecting FTA’s investment in the project. In addition, the more secure and reliable the source of project funding, the higher that project’s ranking will be as compared to projects with less secure sources of funding.

### Interjurisdictional Service Issues

The compatibility of commuter rail with other area transit services will warrant careful consideration. The importance of coordinating transit services is featured in the *Governance Study* in several ways. At the outset of the Study, it is stated that many peer cities have multiple transit providers, so seamless operation is an important goal, if not achieved, in all peer cities. A closely
related issue upon which there was significant consensus among interviewed community and political leaders was: “[T]here exists a need for greater coordination of transit services among the area’s various service providers.”¹⁹

A potential impediment to greater coordination of transit services, as described in the Governance Study is Section 13(c) of the Federal Transit Act, the provision which protects the interests of employees affected by the Section 3 Discretionary Grant or Loan Program. In the context of KCATA’s collective bargaining agreement, section 13 (c) prohibits work from being contracted out if such an action would eliminate jobs, thus limiting the ability of KCATA to contract out routes to private providers. Such limitations are relevant because it is more and more the custom throughout the United States to organize the provision of transit services in a way which reduces cost, which some jurisdictions believe is best achieved through operation of transit services via contract. It is early enough in the study process that the issue should be a consideration rather than a determining factor as to whether or not contract out commuter rail service.

Lessons learned from the Governance Study include the general finding of the peer review that each model transit agency approached its governance components—board membership, funding, operations and planning—in its own unique way. Thus each peer transit agency “must be thought of as having been designed or evolved into a ‘best fit’ for its respective transit area.”²⁰

Relative to the need for coordinated transit services, lessons learned also include: funding of regional transit on a more centralized basis (state leadership in funding, dedicated regional source to develop a comprehensive system without gaps), changes in labor contracting practices to promote less costly delivery of transit services, greater cooperation between member jurisdictions in planning to meet changing demand patterns and need for a long-range transit plan for the region.²¹ Related to the service issues that arise in carrying

¹⁹ Governance Study, page 3.
²⁰ Governance Study, page 94.
²¹ Governance Study, pages 96-98.
out regional transportation initiatives is the need to develop cost and revenue allocations between jurisdictions.

**Recommended Institutional Arrangements**

Institutional arrangements need to be considered from two perspectives. First, how should the governing body be selected in order to fairly represent the community and to effectively oversee the service? Second, what roles should sponsors undertake and what could be performed better by others? Selection of a Governing Body was explored in the *Governance Study* and is briefly described below. Examples of roles a sponsor should perform and those better performed by others are taken from various commuter rail operations from across the country. A recommendation for a Governing Body includes a close link between the governing entity and the communities that use and support commuter rail while a structure that permits contracting out commuter rail operating functions is recommended in determining commuter rail service roles.

**Governing Body Selection**

Issues about which there was significant consensus among community and political leaders in the Kansas City area, included the belief that transportation authority commissioners should be appointed at the local level (not by the Governor) and that representation on the Board of Commissioners “should be linked to those communities that financially support” the transportation authority.\(^{22}\)

In general, the *Governance Study* concluded that it is important to link governance with “areas of greatest transit need” and financial contribution. In other words, the governing body should have a vested interest in providing public transportation where required and in securing funding.

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\(^{22}\) Governance Study, page 2.
Commuter Rail Service Roles

Roles that may be assumed by the sponsor may be described as “Owner, Manager and/or Operator.” Owners of the studied rail lines presently are all private sector freight railroads. That role could shift to the public sector sponsor should it choose to acquire any portion of the lines to be used (deemed unlikely at start-up in the Kansas City region). The owner could be the States of Missouri and Kansas, individually or together, or a regional agency or other public entity if suitably empowered.

The service manager would take on the financial responsibility and risk inherent in operating the service and would be responsible for funding and obtaining the major assets used in the service. Such assets would include commuter rail equipment, shop facilities and track access agreements. In addition the manager would select and oversee the service operator and its performance. The manager would decide on the levels and types of service to be provided in each corridor and be responsible for marketing and fare policies. The manager could be the same entity as the owner, a specifically chartered organization or an existing transit agency or a bureau/department of the Kansas or Missouri Departments of Transportation.

The final potential role is that of operator. The operator is the entity – or entities - that supplies the crews and runs the trains. Various operating functions such as track and equipment maintenance, and train operations may be contracted to different parties, as is done by the Southern California’s Metrolink. The operator may be the same entity as the manager or even the manager and owner, as is the case with some of the older commuter rail services in the East or the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD), which owns the track it operates over, manages and funds its service, and directly employs the crews and other operating and maintenance personnel. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the operator can be an independent company that supplies train operating functions as a contractor to the commuter rail manager. Examples of this arrangement are Herzog Transit Services, which operates the Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) in California or Amtrak and CSX, which operate one and two routes, respectively, of Maryland Rail Commuter Service (MARC). The predominant trend among
Implementation Strategy

recent commuter rail start-ups, and a course strongly recommended by RLBA, is to structure the commuter rail service so that the operator is not the same entity as the manager, thereby allowing the manager to seek competitive bids for a third party operator.

**Structural/Infrastructure Changes Required**

The *Detailed Corridor Analysis* report described infrastructure improvements and additions to be made pursuant to starting service in each of the three corridors. In addition, a new shop and daytime train storage facility would be required, preferably in or near downtown. Union Station trackage would need to be modified to accommodate start-up service for all corridors (some changes would be specific for service to Lawrence) and other track enhancements would be required should commuter rail service grow beyond initial, start-up volumes. Capital costs of starting service in each of the corridors were shown earlier in Table 2.

**Equipment Options**

Equipment options were considered in Tasks 3 and 4 and discussed in the respective reports. The *Detailed Corridor Analysis* (Task 4) report stated: “[T]rainsets were projected to include a rebuilt diesel locomotive, four bilevel coaches and a bilevel cab control car (a coach equipped with an engineer's compartment with operating controls so that the train can be operated with that car in the lead). This enables push-pull operations instead of having to turn the train upon completion of each run. This greatly improves operating efficiency and is standard commuter rail operating procedure where diesel-powered trains are used. Coaches could be single level or bilevel. Bilevel cars are prevalent with agencies purchasing new equipment. Their greater seating capacity is cost-effective and the cars generally are popular with customers. A spare locomotive and cars are projected for each corridor and an allowance made for spare parts.” It is important to note that the preceding is a preliminary recommendation and that equipment selection indeed should receive ongoing consideration as implementation planning progresses. The market for used equipment varies as agencies release or acquire used cars.
New products may be on the market, for example, a new diesel multiple unit (DMU)\textsuperscript{23} designed by Colorado Railcar Manufacturing has been approved by the FRA\textsuperscript{24} and is likely to be commercially available by the time the Kansas City Region is ready to make a final equipment selection. Again quoting from the *Detailed Corridor Analysis* report, “[A]s implementation draws nearer, the commuter rail sponsor could choose between new and used equipment and single and bilevel cars, based upon final ridership projections, equipment availability and cost and project funding.”

*Coordination with Freight Rail Service*

*Including Bypass Strategies and Capacity Options*

Commuter rail implementation would require various capacity improvement projects, as described in the *Detailed Corridor Analysis* report. Should commuter train volumes grow after start-up, additional capacity enhancements likely would be needed. While the most direct approach is to improve facilities on a commuter route, another valid method of reducing passenger-freight train conflicts would be to re-route freight trains onto another, presumably new or improved, route. Of course, the affected freight railroad (and track owner) would have to be satisfied that service, efficiency and costs associated with using the alternate route resulted in net benefits to it.

Other freight projects of lesser scale than a bypass can provide benefits to commuter service if they reduce train conflicts, increase operating speeds or enhance route capacity. For example, the planned Argentine Connection project described in the *Detailed Corridor Analysis* report would benefit Lawrence commuter trains by increasing speed and reducing conflicts. Contributing to its cost through per-train user fees or by other negotiated arrangement would be a valid way for commuter service to contribute to increased line capacity.

\textsuperscript{23} A DMU Diesel Multiple Unit is a self-propelled, passenger vehicle. A compliant DMU is permitted to share track with freight and/or conventional passenger trains.

In summary, commuter and freight rail services will need to cooperate in managing and increasing line capacity. The sponsor's contribution could be in the form of on-line capacity projects, support of freight initiatives like the Argentine Connection, or by contributing to bypass or other capacity projects on lines, which offer alternatives to the line on which commuter service is desired.

**Modification to the Multimodal Feeder/Distribution System**

The feeder/distribution system is critical to the success of commuter rail in many communities and will be especially so in the Kansas City region. Commuter destinations in downtown Kansas City as well as in Kansas City, Kansas (served by the 18th Street station on the Lawrence line) are widely dispersed and generally not within walking distance of proposed downtown stations. Crowne Center is the exception, being relatively close and easily accessible from Union Station. Commuters destined to other locations will need to use some sort of a distributor service.

The downtown distributor service could be performed by High Capacity Transit (HCT) or by conventional shuttle busses. Whatever the mode, sufficient distribution capacity needs to be available immediately when commuter trains reach Union Station. HCT operations planning should incorporate commuter volumes to be sure that headways and vehicle capacity are sufficient to distribute rapidly the hundreds of people who could emerge from each commuter train.

If shuttle busses are the primary distributors, they should be dedicated to the commuter rail service. Shuttle busses should be staged physically as close to arriving trains as possible and leave as soon as full after a train’s arrival but they should not leave on a time schedule before the train arrives and passengers have completed their transfer. Evening service also should be dedicated to feeding specific commuter rail departures. Shuttle busses should make a circuit of their assigned pickup area and then move promptly to Union Station without trying to serve other origin/destination combinations en route.
Downtown distribution by shuttle bus could be conducted by KCATA or by a new service operated, probably contracted, as an adjunct to the commuter rail service. Either way, rail commuters need to be made aware that the distribution system is convenient, integrated and dedicated and that they will not be left to rely on a regular bus on regular bus routes.

The 18th Street station on Corridor H is expected to be the destination for about 150 initial daily passengers bound for destinations in Kansas City, Kansas, beyond walking distance from the station. It would need a distribution service dedicated to commuter train schedules like the one described above, but on a smaller scale, that would move passengers to downtown Kansas City, Kansas and other employment destinations.

The feeder/distribution concept should be similar at outlying stations but the density and proportion of use can be expected to be much less. Commuter rail riders, especially users of new start systems, tend to arrive at their origin station preponderantly by auto. Many park and ride, while others are dropped off, but the share of transit users to and from outlying stations is usually quite small in comparison with those using autos. Morning and evening distribution systems serving outlying stations should be developed using the same principles presented above for the downtown system but scaled in proportion to potential transit-using ridership at each outlying station.

**Land Use Policies and Possible Zoning Changes: Practical Examples**

Transportation and Land Use Development Experiences of Three or More Other Commuter Rail Lines with Characteristics Similar to the Kansas City Region

Transit system managers have found to no surprise that the heavier the ridership, the more conducive to transit oriented development around passenger stations. A quick search of the land use surrounding passenger rail stations will yield numerous examples pertaining to developments on light rail or heavy rail (subway) systems. Harder to find are examples of land use projects around commuter rail stations. Though there is no one fixed reason as to why there are fewer adjacent land use initiatives, commuter rail stations
tend to be used by fewer riders than other rail transit systems and be surrounded by huge parking lots rather than transit oriented development. However, commuter rail land use initiatives do exist. Proximity to a transit station, including commuter rail, is often cited as a selling point for many uses, particularly residential.

In Manassas Park, Virginia near the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter rail station, a new mixed-use development has been proposed, to include shops, a hotel and a gated apartment complex on 11 acres of land presently used for industrial purposes. Considered a largely residential community, Manassas Park has no defined downtown. The proposed development would provide a walk and ride neighborhood where people can live, shop, eat and commute to their jobs.

As ridership has grown on the VRE system, land in proximity to its stations has attracted developer’s attention. Scores of new high-end housing developments are being constructed directly adjacent to or within easy walking distance of VRE stations. The Washington Post declared that the stations "are becoming the new magnet for growth in Northern Virginia." At least one developer is entertaining the idea of creating a new station on the line to complement its plans for a community to include housing, hotels, a theater and a cultural center.

Other parts of the housing stock spectrum are being included in development plans as seen with Metrolink, the commuter rail service of the Los Angeles region. Metrolink is beginning to partner with developers to create transit villages, designed to make available affordable housing near transportation corridors. The Village Green development, located adjacent to the Sylmar-San Fernando Metrolink station, has seen 70 percent of its properties sold to low and moderate income families.

Everett, Washington, the eventual northern terminus of Sound Transit’s Sounder commuter rail service, will feature a unique multilimodal station and educational center. In addition to being served by Amtrak, area bus, taxi and airport shuttle service, the station houses space for college level courses.

The RLBA Team
offered by five area colleges and a state-run career development center. Built in what has been described by the Seattle Post-Intelligencer Reporter as a "bleak industrial area" it is expected that the area eventually will host a variety of retail and service-oriented businesses that will cater to commuters. Other communities along the Sounder route see the service as a means to revitalize their downtowns and as a magnet drawing further development.