

Riders' Digest

Regional Call Center (816) 221-0660

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Fate Of Metro Bus Service Now In The Voters' Hands

Election
Day

Tuesday, Nov. 4

Voter Registration
Deadline

Wednesday, Oct. 8

KCMO Board
of Elections

(816) 842-4820

Public Input Will Impact Planning

Approximately 300 people attended the six public meetings the ATA conducted to discuss potential cutbacks in Kansas City, Mo., bus service. More than 110 individuals sent e-mails, and another 85 left voice-mail comments on a special phone line.

The ATA appreciates the response it has received to its call for Metro customers and the general public to respond to the transit funding situation. Messages can still be left at (816) 346-0300 or sent to metro@kcata.org. Letters should be addressed to Planning Department, KCATA, 1200 E. 18th St., Kansas City, Mo. 64108. The input will have an impact.

"We're adjusting our plans already, based on the public's input," said ATA Planning/Special Services Director Mark Swope. "Sunday service is important to people. The challenge is restoring some service on Sundays means cutting service at other times important to people. There's no way to make cuts this deep without it affecting people's lives."

Poll Numbers Show Support For Transit

The Regional Transit Alliance, a local advocacy group, has commissioned a survey to gauge the general public's support for transit. The numbers are encouraging.

Nearly 57.5 percent of the Kansas City, Mo., residents polled say they would support a sales tax hike to preserve Metro service, and 72.0 percent consider public transit as important as public safety, parks, sewers and other basic services.



ATA General Manager Mark Huffer discusses the transit funding crisis in Kansas City, Mo., at six public meetings in July.

cuts unavoidable. Initial cutback plans call for eliminating some routes entirely, less frequent service on most other routes and reduced weeknight service. Saturday night and all Sunday service could face elimination. Share-A-Fare service would also be affected.

The main emphasis is on saving as much weekday rush-hour service as possible. Eighty-two percent of Metro customers use the service during the weekday rush hours, for job-related trips.

Pending the outcome of the election, the ATA will continue developing two sets of service plans – one for service reductions, the other for service improvements.

"We have to plan for cuts, but we're hopeful we'll never have to implement that plan," ATA General Manager Mark Huffer said. "It's up to the voters."

Increased Funding Would Prevent Metro Service Cuts

Without additional funding to offset a \$12 million revenue shortfall, Metro bus service will be cut 20 to 25 percent, effective January 2004.

On Aug. 7, the Kansas City, Mo., City Council approved a transit tax ballot measure that, if passed, would prevent the service reductions. Now the fate of Metro bus service in Kansas City, Mo., is in the voters' hands.

When they go to the polls Nov. 4, Kansas City, Mo., voters will determine whether or not to approve a three-eighths cent transit tax, which would be collected five years, starting in April of 2004. The tax hike would generate about \$22 million per year, enough to allow for some modest Metro service improvements.

A "no" vote would make service

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– ATA General Manager Mark Huffer

TROLLEY TRACK TRAIL



At 10 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 6, the ATA will officially dedicate the final two-mile segment of the Trolley Track Trail, which was recently completed. The dedication ceremony will be at 85th & Troost, near Stroud's restaurant. The trail stretches a total of seven miles, from Westport Road to 85th & Woodland, along what had been the last Kansas City streetcar route, the Country Club line. The ATA acquired the land in 1981, and it has since been developed, through public and private sector funding, into a popular walking, jogging and bicycle trail.

Service To Northland Transit Center

Five Metro routes will begin serving the new Boardwalk Square MetroCenter in the Northland on Monday, Sept. 28. The new facility, funded through a federal grant, will be the major transfer point for the #129-I-29 Express, #136-Northland Link, #142-North Oak, #229-Tiffany Springs MetroFlex and #243-Antioch/Barry Road.

The MetroCenter features 42 parking spaces for commuters, a clock tower and three shelters, two of which will be enclosed and have heating systems. The Missouri Department of Transportation has leased the property to the ATA for 25 years for only \$1 per year.

Chiefs Express Set For Long Season

The Chiefs kick off the regular season Sept. 7 at Arrowhead Stadium as they clash with the San Diego Chargers. The Chiefs Express will roll out to each Chiefs' home game, through the regular season finale and hopefully into the playoffs. The

roundtrip fare for all ages is \$7.50.

Metro Monthly Passes and Reduced Farecards are no longer accepted. However, the Chiefs Express' fast, convenient service is a savings over stadium parking.

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Three Frequently Asked Questions

These three questions were among the most frequently asked as the ATA gathered public input about potential cuts in Metro bus service:

How can ATA buy new buses and bus stop signs when it claims to be in a crisis?

ATA, like all transit systems, receives federal grants for purchases of capital items such as new buses, signs, technology equipment, etc. These grants cannot be used for operating purposes (salaries, fuel, etc.). Even in times of fiscal difficulties, it is good business practice to maintain a capital program to replace outdated buses and equipment in order to reduce maintenance expenses in the operating budget.



Why are we just being told about this funding crisis that could impact service so significantly?

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The ATA has been publicly discussing the crisis for several years, including coverage in the local media while working on several different fronts to build support for transit services. The ATA supported a statewide tax initiative on the ballot last August called Proposition B, that failed at the polls. If it had passed, it would have provided \$12 million for transit in the Kansas City metropolitan area, thus preventing the current crisis.

Instead of a new tax, or service reductions, can't ATA simply raise the fares?

Most people attending the ATA's public meetings showed a willingness to pay a higher fare. They said they'd rather do that than see bus service reduced so severely.



But how much would Metro cus-

tomers have to pay?

To completely cover the ATA's \$12 million revenue shortfall in 2004 by charging more at the farebox, The Metro base fare would have to skyrocket – from \$1 on most routes to about \$2.75. And everybody who is riding now would have to continue riding. Transit studies indicate for every 10-percent fare increase ridership dips 3 percent.

Currently, passenger fare accounts for about 16 percent of the ATA's revenues.

Why, when it needs more revenue, is the ATA continuing to offer 25-cent fares on Ozone Alert! days?

A federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant allows the ATA to offer the discounted fare on these days in an effort to encourage more people to ride The Metro and, thus, reduce a leading air pollutant, auto emissions. The CMAQ funding reimburses the ATA for the discounted fare.

STAY INFORMED

If you are interested in receiving the latest information about ATA's funding situation and Metro service, clip this form and send to **ATA Marketing, 1200 E. 18th St., Kansas City, Mo. 64108** or e-mail us at www.kcata.org.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Phone: () _____
