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## Staff Team

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## Consultant Team

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- Meghan Bahn (Works with the homeless shelter)
- JT Thornburg



## Summary of Public Outreach Feedback

R. Martin presented findings from the public outreach efforts.

- Longer service hours vs. more frequent service
  - M. Bahn noted that she works with homeless shelter residents, who would likely prefer longer service hours. She has also worked with major employers in the past who have trouble hiring people for later shifts because employees won't have a way to get home after 8 pm and on Sundays. Some shelter residents feel trapped on Sundays, when there is no service.
  - C. Tilden wondered if it is possible to further segment survey responses to understand which types of riders prefer which options. For example, perhaps preferences differ by route.
  - M. Schreiber wondered if it is possible to segment KU vs. non-KU rider responses. KU does have later service available, so this question is less relevant to those riders.
  - L. McCulloch noted that this could also be decided on a route-by-route basis.
  - A. Quisenberry asked whether it is acceptable to have some routes with longer service hours, and some routes with higher frequency.
    - B. Palchik responded that yes, this can vary by route. First we determine coverage, and we later determine appropriate schedules (frequency and span of service) for each route.
- Add Sunday service vs. improve existing service
  - M. Bahn noted that this survey was completed in the summer. In the winter, when weather is worse, Sunday service is likely more important. Homeless people walk 5-10 miles per day.
  - F. Lavergne asked the group to consider how we can move forward with piloting Sunday service, for example, if we have survey results that don't favor Sunday service. Can we still pilot Sunday services?
  - C. Tilden noted that any tool has limitations, and any given survey shouldn't be used as a reason to not conduct a Sunday pilot.
  - B. Palchik noted that the team would like to make as many improvements as possible; the tradeoff questions are helpful when we have to make hard decisions. Responses help us to prioritize improvements, but do not exclude decisions.
- More frequent bus stops vs. faster travel times
  - C. Tilden noted that sidewalks currently aren't very nice, which may drive preferences for more frequent bus stops. For example, without a good sidewalk network, people with disabilities might be challenged to access bus stops if they are very far apart. If the multimodal network overall improved, perhaps opinions on this question would change. In another system, as amenities improved, riders' perception of time spent waiting decreased, even though the actual time didn't change.



- More service frequency vs. more service coverage
  - M. Bahn noted that this might vary by route. Some places might need more coverage to serve specific populations, or it may depend on sidewalk safety.
  - A. Quisenberry noted that the size of the vehicle also makes a difference. Larger vehicles can't necessarily go through neighborhood roads. If buses are too large, community members may complain.
- Improve existing service vs. serve new areas
  - M. de Vries: Making a map of where apartment complexes are being built west of Wakarusa apartment buildings could be helpful. We could also compare with the number of single-family homes.
  - M. Bahn noted that she also works with affordable housing. It is difficult to justify building affordable housing to the west where there is no transit available, even if there may be affordable land there.
  - C. Tilden noted that the Lynx is one of the largest apartment complexes recently constructed, and it is currently served by one route.
- Maintain service levels vs. eliminate fares
  - A. Quisenberry noted that both City and KU budgets are tight. If the KU student senate won't agree to fee increases, KU may need to reduce services. It is hard to be confident about what budgets look like long-term.
  - C. Tilden agrees with A. Quisenberry and noted that the topic of free fares needs to be a larger community conversation. It is hard to imagine a decision to move fare-free without a City referendum to provide a consistent source of funds.
  - M. Schieber asked how much of the operating budget is based on fares, and how much the City and/or KU would be losing if they went fare-free.
    - B. Palchik responded that while we don't have those exact figures right now, fares typically cover about 10%, maybe 20% of operating costs.
    - A. Quisenberry noted that on the City side, going fare-free would require \$400,000-\$500,000 (which amounts to less than 10%).
    - B. Palchik noted that responses to this question likely reflect priorities. People might want to reduce fares, but without negative impacts.
  - M. Bahn noted that the shelter gets some free bus passes from the City to distribute to shelter residents. They would appreciate if there was a free pass program for very low-income residents that wasn't tied to shelter residence.
  - M. Fisher Isaacs, from the public library, echoed M. Bahn's comment. They received an allotment of transit passes to give out, and the library augmented this with purchased bus passes. There was very high demand for these free bus passes and they could not keep up, so they discontinued the program. They felt that people sincerely needed the passes and would support a reduced or free low-income pass program.
- Focus Group Responses



- M. Bahn noted that many homeless persons have traumatic brain injuries and need simpler information about how to use the bus. They often do not have phones.
- M. Scheiber suggested adding ranking questions in future surveys to rank respondents' overall priorities.
- Survey Responses
  - B. Palchik noted that this information feeds into an iterative process as we develop service scenarios. We first determine preferred coverage and later determine schedules such as frequency and span of service for each route. The team will try to incorporate these themes as much as possible.

### Upcoming public outreach program

F. Lavergne reviewed the spectrum of public outreach strategies for upcoming outreach.

- M. de Vries noted that the University governing board, with PTAC, should be included.
- F. Gipp discussed access to Haskell University. They are planning a town hall after elections in November to engage Haskell. Haskell students pay 50 center per ride, but he noted that there could be opportunities to have a flat fee similar to KU's arrangement.
  - M. de Vries: Suggested that he contact Adam Weigel before setting up a town hall meeting. The City and KU would like to establish a relationship with Haskell and would be open to discussing this further.
  - A. Quisenberry agreed. He noted that many years ago, Haskell students were able to ride KU on Wheels system at no cost, but the agreement did not stay in place. He echoed that the City and KU would be happy to talk about working something out.
  - G. Reinheimer noted that Haskell runs its own bus to KU on Sundays.
- C. Tilden suggested engaging downtown Lawrence businesses, especially since they were not successfully engaged in the focus group process.
- For scheduling, Foursquare ITP is open to lunch or evening meetings and prefer weekdays. Weekends often sound like a good idea, but people often don't want to commit to doing non-family activities on the weekends. It could work to conduct two meetings, one in the daytime and one in the evening. We could also do an additional meeting focused on the universities, including both KU and Haskell.
  - M. de Vries would like to hold one university-focused meeting and would like to have Haskell input.
- The more formal meetings will happen on Zoom, but other popups will be held in person.
- Curtis Hall at Haskell is where students eat lunch and would be a good place to table.

## Next Steps

**October Steering Committee Meeting\* – October 12<sup>th</sup>, 5:30 PM –7:30 PM**

**\*Special meeting to facilitate October public outreach**