



Lawrence Transit and KU Route Redesign Study Community Engagement

Prepared By



&



FOURSQUARE INTEGRATED
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

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Lawrence Transit and KU Route Redesign Community Engagement

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OVERVIEW

The purpose of the community engagement plan for the Lawrence Transit and KU Route Redesign Study is to document the overall public and stakeholder engagement process and to outline specific community engagement methods, tactics, and approaches. Community engagement is an important aspect of the planning process, as it is key to developing relationships with stakeholders and building trust in the process and resulting recommendations.

The community engagement plan presented in this document recognizes the details of the planning process, provides for continuing substantive input by stakeholders, and ensures that stakeholder concerns get fair consideration. The recommended approach is to engage with a range of diverse stakeholders, including transit riders, non-riders, community and University leaders, and public agency staff, to ensure a structured, inclusive, and transparent planning process.

OBJECTIVES/GOALS FOR COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Inform	the community about the Study, including key phases and opportunities for engagement.
Consult & Involve	the community by obtaining feedback on current issues, alternatives, and recommendations, ensuring that concerns and objectives are consistently understood and considered.
Demonstrate	that community input has influenced the decision-making and planning priorities.
Build	partnerships with other agencies and stakeholders, recognizing the effect this effort has on the community, and that it complements other community initiatives.
Intentionally include	people and organizations who may face systemic barriers to engagement in the planning process, particularly Black, Indigenous, and people of color. To support equitable outcomes, we will conduct regular audits of the engagement process to identify gaps in participation.

SUCCESS

- Increased ridership, access, productivity, reliability, and community support

VISION

- Route redesign will result in a safer, more connected, and convenient network for Lawrence.
- Route redesign will increase access to employment, schools, and services for all ages and abilities.
- Route redesign will provide economic benefits to individuals and businesses.
- The Study will build upon previous local and regional planning efforts to create a unified vision for transit service throughout Lawrence.

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COMMUNICATION METHODS AND TOOLS

Three main tools will be used for getting input and feedback.

1. Surveys
2. Focus Groups
3. Virtual Public Meetings

We will use Interactive Communication methods in instances where information will be provided and input will be solicited.

Informative/Recruitment communication methods will be used to get out information to the public, inform them about what is happening and let them know where to go to receive more input and/or get involved. Many times, more than one tool will be used at one time in order to provide notification to as many people as possible.

The list below shows outreach tools planned for this project. The following pages include additional information about these communication tools.

Interactive Communication	Informative/Recruitment Communication Tools
Steering Committee Meetings	Project website , City website
Focus Groups	Direct email, City website
Virtual Public Meetings	Social media ¹ , flyers ² , KU broadcast email, City e-news email , press release, project website ³
Transit Survey	Social Media, flyers, KU broadcast email, City e-news email , paper surveys ⁴ , press release, project website ⁵
Staff Interviews	Direct email, First Transit Connect app

¹ Social media accounts include Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/lawrencetransit/>) and Twitter (<https://twitter.com/TransitKU>)

² Paper flyers typically posted inside buses and at the Lawrence Public Library

³ Recordings of public meetings will be posted on project website

⁴ Paper survey distributed and returned on board buses or via intercept survey by City, KU, and First Transit staff

⁵ Summary and analysis of survey results will be posted on project website

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INTERACTIVE COMMUNICATION

Steering Committee

Regular Steering Committee meetings will ensure timely participation and keep the process on schedule. The committee will meet monthly through the end of the process (April – December 2021) and provide input on community engagement strategies, identify issues and opportunities, refine information through an iterative process, and review the draft plan.

The steering committee members represent a diverse and inclusive representation of the community and are individuals who work toward the best for the community, University of Kansas, and Lawrence Transit.

Steering Committee Representation:

City of Lawrence Director of Equity & Inclusion	Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)	Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods (LAN)	Multi-modal Transportation Commission
Douglas County Senior Resource Center (SRC)	KU Transit Commission	Lawrence Community Shelter	City of Lawrence Municipal Services & Operations
First Transit	KU Transportation Services	Lawrence Public Library	Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)
First Transit Bus Operator	L-DC Metropolitan Planning Organization	Lawrence Public Schools	The Chamber
Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region VII	L-DC Public Health	Lawrence Transit	United Way Human Services Coalition
Haskell Indian Nations University	L-DC Sustainability Office	LiveWell Douglas County	

Focus Groups

Throughout the route redesign process, it will be important to evaluate unique and diverse community perspectives that may not be captured in broad discussions about route redesign. As key issues are identified, focus group meetings will be planned to obtain additional information from organizations and individuals. The purpose of these focus groups is to have more in-depth conversations to further refine certain aspects of the plan. When appropriate, the process will be standardized to draw comparisons. In addition to soliciting input, focus groups can educate the various stakeholders about the planning process and manage expectations.

Focus groups will target key groups (see Appendix A) to give feedback and participate in discussions; and will also be open to the public.

Target #1: University Affiliates - KU and Haskell University staff leadership, student leadership, and faculty leadership

Target #2: Frontline Staff - KU and Lawrence Transit drivers, dispatchers, and supervisors

Target #3: Major Employers (other than KU) and businesses / civic groups

Target #4: Community Resources – city staff and representatives of schools, medical facilities, social services, and other community service providers

Focus groups may include, but not be limited to, the following example perspectives that may require more in-depth discussion:

Access to food	Women/children transit needs/ experiences	Black, Indigenous, and people of color systemic barriers, including language barriers
Access to education	Student transit needs/experiences	People without technology/houseless transit needs/experience
Access to employment		

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Virtual Public Meetings

Virtual public meetings are planned at three times during this project. Public meetings are one of the most effective ways to meaningfully engage stakeholders and ultimately receive valuable feedback used to finalize the project recommendations. The project team, University of Kansas, and Lawrence Transit will use a variety of methods to promote and recruit attendance to the meetings. Information presented and displayed at each meeting will be posted on the project website (<https://lawrencetransit.org/transfer-facility/>) allowing those who could not attend an opportunity to review the information and provide input.

The purpose of the first public meetings are to:

- Collect input on the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

The purpose of the second public meetings are to:

- Present two preliminary service improvement scenarios and collect feedback on preferences and priorities.

The purpose of the third public meetings are to:

- Present a draft final recommended service improvement plan, incorporating feedback from previous meetings.

Transit Survey

One of the best methods to determine how to improve transit service is to ask passengers (and prospective passengers) what they would like to see change or stay the same about transit service. The plan will encourage survey participation from a diverse and representative population.

The transit survey will initially be launched online (using the [Lawrence Listens](https://lawrenceks.org/listens/surveys/) platform/<https://lawrenceks.org/listens/surveys/>) prior to the completion of the Spring semester at KU. The online survey will be further promoted at the first round of public meetings to encourage broad public participation. A print-ready version of the survey will be made available to KU and Lawrence Transit staff for hard-copy distribution as each institution sees fit. Each institution will also be responsible for collecting hard-copy surveys and entering the responses into the online survey platform.

Survey respondents will be asked to list the route or routes they use most frequently. This information will be used to determine if the survey sample size for each route has achieved statistical significance relative to the route's average daily ridership. If the response rate for any route falls short of its response rate target, the study team will attempt to close the gap with in-person follow-up intercept surveys. The intercept survey will be conducted at key stops and/or onboard buses.

Staff Interviews

The project team will hold interviews with front-line staff responsible for the delivery of transit services, including bus operators, dispatchers, maintenance staff, and customer service representatives, as these employee groups are the eyes and ears of the system. Seeking their input and perspective is a useful and effective strategy, both for identifying ways to improve the system, and for building support, momentum, and ownership for the project overall.

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INFORMATIVE/RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Notices and Flyers

The project team will circulate notices and flyers electronically on the city website and on other partner/stakeholder websites (ie KU, USD, NextDoor, Utility newsletters, etc.) and through existing communication forms (currently distributed newsletters, emails) to share information with the public and other stakeholders. These notices will inform the community of upcoming study activities, and direct/link the targeted groups to the online survey to seek input and feedback.

Printed notices and flyers will be posted on buses, and at strategic locations throughout the community (libraries, government buildings, KU Student centers, community centers, grocery stores) and through existing communication forms (currently distributed newsletters) to share information on upcoming events and the online survey. These notices will have QR codes and URL links to online surveys to seek input and feedback.

Project Website

The City will host a project page on its website devoted to the Route Redesign Study. The information on the website will inform and educate the community regarding events, activities, and progress associated with the planning process and direct links to the online survey to encourage participation. Information presented and displayed at each public meeting will be posted on the website, allowing those who could not attend an opportunity to review the information and provide input. Outside of survey opportunities, the public is encouraged to provide feedback to staff and the project team via email at info@lawrencetransit.org.

Email Notifications & First Transit Connect App

One of the best ways to get the word out about the planning process is through email. Utilizing existing [City e-news](#) email distribution lists, important information about the process with links to surveys and the project website will be sent out as needed. The project team will utilize existing stakeholder notifications lists and supplement with additional stakeholder contacts as needed. As the public outreach efforts continue, the project team will encourage people to provide their email address so they can continue to be updated about the planning process.

In some cases, direct email to specific focus group stakeholders will be utilized. KU broadcast emails are used to specifically engage students, faculty, and staff of KU, and the First Transit Connect App is used to engage bus operators, dispatchers, and other First Transit employees.

The project team will respect privacy of individuals on the distribution list and will not send out excessive emails or share email addresses with those not directly involved with the project.

Social Media

Social media will be utilized during this planning process to encourage community participation in surveys with direct links to online surveys and the project website. Targeted ads can also be used on the social media platforms to encourage input from a diverse cross-section of Lawrence residents and members of the KU community.

Press Releases

Press releases and public meeting notices will be distributed by University of Kansas and Lawrence Transit with assistance from the project team at key milestones. University of Kansas and Lawrence Transit staff will be the primary contacts for any articles or information requests; however, the project team can assist with information gathering and status updates.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The graphic below outlines the party responsible for carrying out the specific communication tools once the consultant team has begun any initial steps. The primary responsible party will be supported by key team members as appropriate.

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Consultant Team Role: Foursquare ITP will create and provide all materials with support from Shockey Consulting as needed in terms of project updates and information.

Kansas University and Lawrence Transit Staff Role: KU and Lawrence Transit staff lead tools identified below with the support of the consultant team for content and project updates.

Communication Tool	University of Kansas and Lawrence Transit Staff	Consultant Team
Steering Committee	○	○
Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings		○
Virtual Public Meetings		○
Transit Survey		○
Staff Interviews		○
Engagement Materials (flyers, notices)		○
Project Website Page – content		○
Project Website Page – posting	○	
Email Notifications – content		○
Email Notifications – distribution	○	
Social Media – content		○
Social Media – posting	○	
Press releases – content		○
Press releases – distribution	○	

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OUTREACH SCHEDULE

The schedule for key outreach activities is shown in the table below. These timeframes are approximate and may change, as necessary.

	2021									
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
Media	○ →									
Survey	○ →			○ →		○ →				
Project Website Page	○ →									
Email Notifications	○ →									
Social Media	○ →									
Steering Committee	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○		
Focus Groups		○		○		○				
Virtual Public Meetings		○		○		○				

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APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER LIST WORKSHEET

Stakeholder / Target Audience	Steering Committee Representation	Focus Group Attendee	Representative Population	Target 1	Target 2	Target 3	Target 4	Notes
Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center							X	
Bus Passengers							X	
City of Lawrence - Director of Equity & Inclusion							X	
City of Lawrence - Leadership							X	
City of Lawrence - Municipal Services & Operations							X	
City of Lawrence - Parks and Recreation							X	
Community Organizations/ Civic Groups						X		
Douglas County Senior Resource Center (SRC)							X	
Downtown Lawrence Inc (DLI)						X		
Explore Lawrence						X		
First Transit					X			
First Transit Bus Operators					X			
FTA Region VII								
Haskell - Staff Leadership & Faculty				X				
Haskell - Student Leadership & Students				X				
Heartland Community Health Center							X	
Independence Inc (ADA representative)							X	
Just Food							X	

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Stakeholder / Target Audience	Steering Committee Representation	Focus Group Attendee	Representative Population	Target 1	Target 2	Target 3	Target 4	Notes
Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)							X	
Key Employers (Hallmark, Berry, Cottonwood)						X		
KU - Staff Leadership & Faculty				X				
KU - Student Leadership & Students				X				
KU Transit Commission					X			
KU Transportation Services					X			
L-DC Metropolitan Planning Organization					X			
Lawrence Association of Neighborhoods (LAN)							X	
Lawrence Community Shelter							X	
Lawrence Public Library							X	
Lawrence Public Schools - Elementary Schools (parents)							X	
Lawrence Public Schools - High Schools (students & parents)							X	
Lawrence Public Schools - Middle Schools (parents)							X	
Lawrence/Douglas Co Public Health							X	
Lawrence/Douglas Co Sustainability Office							X	
LiveWell Douglas County							X	
LMH Health							X	
Multi-modal Transportation Commission							X	
Peaslee Center							X	

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Stakeholder / Target Audience	Steering Committee Representation	Focus Group Attendee	Representative Population	Target 1	Target 2	Target 3	Target 4	Notes
Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)							X	
Religious Institutions/Organizations							X	
Residents							X	
Spanish-speaking community members							X	
Student Apartment Complexes				X				
The Chamber						X		
United Way Human Services Coalition							X	