

STAKEHOLDER MEETING NOTES

COMO Bus Service Evaluation

Thursday, March 17, 2016 | Columbia, MO

Overview

The study team held a series of 11 small group stakeholder meetings on Thursday, March 17, 2016 in Columbia, Missouri to discuss potential improvements to Columbia's future transit system. Meeting attendees included representatives from the following stakeholder groups:

- Municipal staff/officials
- Business development (downtown Community Improvement District, employers, economic development groups, etc)
- COMO Connect drivers
- Transit providers (transit and paratransit)
- Education (universities, etc)
- Housing (neighborhoods, apartment complexes)
- Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC)
- Transit and paratransit riders
- Advocates

Approximately 37 people signed in to the meeting, not including several bus drivers. Stakeholders responded to questions that related to:

- Familiarity the transit system
- The refined COMO Connect vision
- Perceptions of support for transit
- Priority service
- Potential improvements
- Priority challenges and opportunities
- Funding transit improvements
- Other topics

Popular comments involved:

- The importance of providing transit service
- Drivers' good rapport with riders
- Transfer point coordination and timing
- Extending service hours and areas
- Novice riders' knowledge of the bus system, its services, and smartphone app
- Suggestions for how to improve service performance and convenience
- Improving transit ridership, e.g. by targeting students and college/university staff
- Creative funding alternatives, such as public-private partnerships

- Developing apartment-focused partnerships, e.g. apartment with apartment complex; apartments with City, etc.
- The view or opinion that driving is easier and faster than riding the bus
- Key audiences (students, seniors, those “on the verge” of riding the bus), strategies, and tactics for transit marketing and education
- The perception that the buses are empty

Discussion Notes by Stakeholder Group

The following pages include the discussion notes gathered during each of the stakeholder meetings. The study team asked each group a similar series of questions, including:

- Familiarity:** How FAMILIAR are you with Columbia transit system?
- Perceptions of Transit Support:** In your opinion, do you think there is POLITICAL AND/OR COMMUNITY SUPPORT for transit? If not, how would you increase it?
- Vision:** Which of the following COMO Connect Project vision elements is most important to you? Why?
 - Connected network of routes with shorter travel times
 - More service more of the day, throughout more of the city
 - Live within our [financial] means
 - Customer focused
 - Strategic, innovative, responsive, and designed for growth
- Service Priority:** When transit service is refined, which is more important:
 - Making a little bit of transit service available to EVERYONE? Why?
 - Making transit serve those who USE IT MOST? Why?
- Potential Improvements:**
 - What OTHER AREAS should the COMO transit system serve? Why?
 - Service areas, different vehicles, schedules, and hours of operation can improve the performance of a bus system. As the COMO Connect transit vision is refined and implemented, what is needed to improve the PERFORMANCE of the bus system? Why?
 - The experience of convenient transit service often involves shorter wait times, special amenities for transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and other items. As the COMO Connect transit vision is refined and implemented, what is essential to include for more CONVENIENT bus service?
 - What OTHER IMPROVEMENTS or projects are needed to make implementing the COMO Connect transit vision a success?

- **Priority Challenges and Opportunities:**
 - What do you think is the BIGGEST CHALLENGE for making transit service better?
 - As the transit vision is refined, what could be the BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY ahead for making transit in Columbia more successful?
- **Funding:** How supportive would you be of INCREASED FUNDING? What type of funding should be pursued?

Discussion I - Municipal Staff and Officials at 8AM

Perceptions

- Everyone wants better transit; no one wants to pay for it
- Partnering with the University of Missouri (MU) is a non - starter – Past efforts have failed
 - MU – Why would anyone not walk on this campus?
 - Benchmarking cities – All show strong university collaborations
 - Led by students
 - Early investments are now paying dividends
 - State is reluctant to increase fees
 - No previous interest from students
 - MU is concerned about investing in transit – Have other capital costs
 - Parking is the pinch-point on campus
 - MU is considering a park-and-ride lot by the interstate
 - City is not very interested in this approach
 - City sustained losses by extending service to apartments but then cut back
 - Tiger Line – Private sector has filled in some of these gaps
 - Student fee is \$18 per semester for transit
 - Some paying \$150 per semester for shuttles from Hearnes Center
 - They are already paying higher fees
 - Students need to have an incentive to raise fees
 - Student apartments pay for city transit service
 - Students do not think they are paying for transit – Reinforces commuter culture

Vision

- Only 5% are regular bus users
 - Non-users would say financial means is top priority
 - Regular users look at other goals
- We need to get more riders on busses
- Greenway Shuttles [Professional Student Transportation] takes riders for the city system
- Consider fare-free transit
- Increasing frequency

Service Priority

- Better pay for drivers
 - o Better service, better retention, quality folks
- Re-slicing transportation funding will be painful
- Strong support on City Council; weak general support
- Pulling more busses is not going to work
- Put more obligation on the university
 - o At some point, they will not be happy with Greenway Shuttles and will come back to the City for help
- City has offered bus service through campus and Greek Town – Cannot overcome commuter culture
- Roads are everyone's number one priority; sidewalks are just as important as transit
 - o Survey results show that transit is the lowest priority

Potential Improvements

- New Service Areas
 - o Prathersville Road - New service but some riders do not have the money
 - o Lake of the Woods Road and Scott Boulevard are now served
 - o Not going to wait for two busses to get five miles
 - o Need to compress systems and offer fare free core system every 30 minutes
 - o Independent living providers expanded service to low-income residents in order to maintain viability
 - o People whose trip lengths have increased will speak out more than those whose service has increased
 - o Some people will be unhappy if we compress a route and go fare free

Funding

- Cannot increase student fees at this time
- Limited in ability to raise fees – Needs to be put to voters (usually get creamed 70/30)
- Trying to increase property tax for hiring more police

Other Comments

- Commuting area is larger than shown on the slide – Should include Ashland, Jefferson City, and Boone City
- 2011 task force on transit
- Reiterate – Raise for bus drivers
- City finances will be challenged – 50% in sales tax
 - o Down 14% (approx. \$300,000) – Internet commerce is killing state and local governments

Discussion 2 – City Council at 8:45AM

Familiarity

- Yes and No – Some ride; some do not
- State law restricts public schools ability to contract out transportation service – Could include financial partnerships with public transportation
- Private/public university coordination

Perception of Community Support

- People feel transit is a “social good” but many do not use it
- Consider hybrid system, so more people use it – Generate interest, so transit priority increases (need critical mass)
- Including transit “collection points” helps with education but does not mean people will use it
- Hear complaints that busses are empty
- Constituents lobby for small busses but standard size busses are easier to maintain

Vision

- Important elements boil down to money
- More service
- “Connected network...”, especially for low-income workers without vehicles and those who work second and third shifts
- “Strategic/innovative...” because we need to be flexible to respond to new businesses

Service Priority

- Make available to everyone who could possibly use it - No value in compression
- Ridership needs to come from schools, so that people will not see empty buses
- Do schools have to contract bus service? Could the City provide school transportation? School superintendent is pushing to allow the City to bid on school busing contract (maybe school district pays 50% of the costs).
- Coverage is top priority; convenience is second
- If new dollars are available, concentrate on increasing service to areas that need it most (target) - Black and gold lines could be heavier lines

Potential Improvements

- Determine which routes are most traveled as compared to those that are less traveled - Help direct possible changes
- Only way to sell transit is to get people to use it (less empty buses)
- Do not exclude the Wabash Station near downtown
- City to set up resources for bus stop overhaul - Adding transit shelters, etc.

- Electronic way-finding - Example: Bermuda - Signs/poles + vehicle match
- Free service dramatically increases ridership (goal)
- Have free service now for special events
- Note online sites killing sales tax generation - Could have \$2 million+ in revenue if local tax was paid for online sales

Convenience

- Need coverage first, then work on timing
- Need riders. How to get people excited?
 - o Take away the reasons for not riding the bus
- Focus on north-south routes
- Note: Supervisors are also driving

Funding

- Get more drivers, so supervisors can be supervisors, not drivers
- Bus shelter improvements will help
- Need to demonstrate commitment within the constraints today
- Lots of talk about increased taxes
- School district tax is 12 times higher
- Campaign season: Fear of crime is high concern - Path for more public safety
- Two years ago tried property tax increase but it failed

Other Comments

- Comparable College Towns
 - o Selected already? Midwest or National?
 - Columbia's culture is different than Lawrence's, Champagne's, etc

Discussion 3 – Business/Economic Development at 10AM

Familiarity

- Some have ridden but not often or in a while

Perception

- Big empty buses
- How can we spend this much money on something that runs empty
- Support for a system, but not overwhelmingly
 - o Other issues like crime are more important.
- We need a bus system but we are small enough to get around very easily and conveniently by car - Parking is cheap and plentiful
- 15-minute drive vs. 45-minute ride
- Need for employees – Some travel far (cities of Booneville and Mexico by car)

- Columbia has duplicative services
- Trip to Gainesville – They all share the same resources

Political Support

- Seems like it
- Not enough to add more service
- To many transit is not a priority
- Comes down to funding

Vision

- Like to know more about existing ridership - Focus on increasing service for those riders
- Part of downtown development agreement – Apartments buy transit passes from City, but tenants do not always know that passes are available or ask for or use them
- Some tenants/students in downtown do not travel far enough to need car or bus
- Walk 45 minutes to an hour to reach a bus, then Green Line, and then Black Line just to get to work
- A trolley through downtown could attract people to shops and restaurants
- Focus on those that need it, those without a car
 - Heavily in the first ward but not on I-70
- Some need private automobile for business/meetings around town
- Maybe a transit hub would increase ridership
- Main reason for expanding routes was to reach those on the periphery who needed service

Service Priority

- Downtown (services, employers)
- Mall
- Buses could function for a lot less if we planned it better
- Students are not told how transit works
 - Educating students would help
 - There is an app for that
- \$75 monthly parking downtown
- Parking garages sustain themselves with revenue
- City has resisted more parking.
- University should be included
- Are special events included in ridership? Yes - Impact is not significant (approximately 150 per day for The True/False Film Festival)
- Call-a-ride might better serve periphery
- High visibility, frequent downtown shuttle/trolley/circulator
- Bus stops used to have schedules

- Visitors center gives out lots of guides and promotes transit - Lots of people have questions and are intimidated by network map
- Need to ride it to understand and gain familiarity

Opportunities

- Has to be a tipping point where people actually WANT to ride
- Public transportation is hurting in every comparable city
- Changes to system do not always change ridership/transportation culture
- Focus on people who need it
- We are a full service community and people have come to expect it

Challenges

- Downtown evening/late hours – How do we serve this line? Tiger line?
- Sunday services
- Campus
- Raising awareness/marketing

Top Employers

- University
- Medical centers
- Downtown

Funding

- City raided parking garage fund to pay for transit - \$290,000 from parking to transit
- Maybe a fee increase
- If you raise the fee for low-income users, do you decrease ridership?
- Changing transit is a political decision – Roads and public safety are higher priorities
- Parking tickets could be increased to cover transit
- Parking dollars go to the general fund
- Does the City have a lobbyist to advocate for increased funding?
- COMO Connect gets \$20,000 from state – Is that a collection or an allocation problem?
- What about charitable funds? United Way? Kids First?
- City has a program to donate required transit passes - Let's try to help with those who need it
- Raising cigarette and alcohol tax
- All funding is political

Discussions 4 and 5 – Bus Drivers at 12:30 and 2:45PM

Best Routes

- Black and Gold Lines - Take people where they want to go
- Longest routes
- Connect to the right places

Where do people want to go that are not served now

- Midway – Greyhound
- Scott Boulevard – Housing, travel there now
- Route B/ North Paris Road - Get to work, industrial
- Broadway and WW – El Chaparral – New subdivisions
- Further south on Old Plank – Housing
- North Stadium – Apartments (Aaron Drive)
- Park De Ville Place (apartments and condos)
- Waco Road

Worst Routes

- Aqua Line (but keep part up by Murray's) - Needs more trips
- Blue Line
- Orange Line
- Routes are too long
- Time points on Blue Line are off
- School traffic slows route(s) down
- Along St. Charles – Times do not match
- Green – Never picked anyone up through Highlands, Nifong West - None of these people ride the bus
- Light Green Line

What to change

- Aqua Line
- Blue Line
 - More advertising to draw customers
 - Make sure to stay close to neighborhoods so they can still walk to the bus
 - Fix schedules to make transfers easier
 - Improve bus stops at transfer stops
- Add lights at stops, push buttons, solar powered lights
- Not enough shelters
- Difficult to see customers waiting for bus – Light, better reflection on signs
- Need a route on Ash
- Get main line service for Broadway

- Need to get paratransit riders on fixed routes
- Better compliance with university students

Five Stops for Improvement

- Walmart at Conelly
- Whitegate (both sides)
- Walmart at Park De Ville Place
- Library on B side
- Macadoodles, Providence and Green Meadows, east side - Lots of wheelchairs; not really safe right now; have to partner with MoDOT

Two Changes

- Make neighborhood routes run in both directions
- Stagger bus stops so buses stop blocking traffic at Whitegate and at the Health Center
- Eliminate dangerous stops (Clinkscapes, I by Kohls) - There are a lot of nearby stops
- Shorten time points from 5 to 1 – Be more realistic
- Schedules should be finalized and posted
- Blue bus – I-70 and St. Charles is dangerous
- 7th and Wilkes to Whitegate
- Extended hours on weekends
- More efficient paratransit routing
- 10 hours per day, 4 days a week
- Fixed routes back to Wabash, neighborhood routes, drivers can use restrooms
- Keep drivers
- Driver Facilities
- Scott Boulevard turnaround (roundabout)
- Temporary drivers need benefits and adequate pay

Other

- Shelter – Blue Ridge/Providence - Better

Discussion 6 – Education at IPM

Familiarity

- Yes, some route specific, e.g. Gold Line
- School district bus service subject to law – Limits on service provisions, hours, etc.
- Like existing COMO Connect coverage
- Previous engagement finding: People want to reach schools, e.g. high schools – Surprising (Common theme)

- One-mile radius for elementary; two miles for middle and high school – Law says 3+miles required by state for school district
- Can lose school transportation funding if contract out service, etc.
- Those within 1- or 2-mile radius can pay fee for riding school bus
 - o Example: Battle High School

Perceptions of COMO transit

- Good but misconceptions exist: Educating youth about transit per believe busses are empty, dirty, old, do not go where they want to go, and are not safe because people of low income and handicapped ride
 - o Where busses travel to/from
- Good but people are not using it
- Mismatch between complaining about it versus using it
- Gold experience is good - Could come more frequently
- International students have higher transit expectations than exist in the city; Natural transit users but buying and/or sharing cars to get around to stores
- Biggest dissatisfaction is transit convenience – Vibrant system would help students (marketing opportunity?)
- Based on COMET outcomes, elected/political climate is supportive
- Increase political support for transit?
- Direct correlation to dollars
- Meet student needs, e.g. shopping
- Route planning is a challenge: Not on Google Transit yet (ready this summer) - Opportunity to remove barriers
- Without smart phones, you do not know when busses are coming – Kids do not always have smartphones
- Recent COMET survey of kids found they do not know about it - Marketing and education needed

Vision

- “Connected network” And more service
- Later hours – Impacts work for kids and others (second shift, etc)
- Service throughout the day

Service priority

- Potential for inadequacies (big time)
- COMO project made transfers/connections worse – Now have Global Positioning System (GPS) data
- Equity issues – Want everyone to have access
- Providing excellent service for core users
- Easy service elsewhere – No need to study system per signage tells when bus is arriving, etc.
- Have heard that downtown parking is an issue - Fix by focusing on busses
- Issue with small town: faster to walk

- Apartment busses have demand (full vehicles)

Potential Improvements

- Later hours, weekends, Sundays
- Takes too long - People get frustrated and call cabs or school district
- Time stops/transfer times need to be coordinated

Convenience Improvements

- Consistent naming of each scheduled time point
- Bi-directional routes like Black and Gold Lines
- Perception is that transit takes longer than driving/walking
- Fewer needed transfers – Would save time
- For kids: before/after school transportation, coordinate timing of COMO bus and school district timing plus increased frequency
 - Need shelters in order to improve safety and security for younger riders
- Coordinated activity times to pair with busses

Biggest Challenge

- More frequency and later service while still needing riders (chicken and egg)
- Funding

One Change (Opportunity)

- High School perspective: Event specific route adjustment, e.g. for True Falls, Roots and Blues, etc.
- Improve directness of Gold Line as it travels downtown
- Just cross through downtown rather than going around it
- Match up/work on connection/transfer points

Other

- Explain fare/cost breakdown
- Nice if could buy passes on busses
- Customer service is good at COMO bus

Discussion 7 – Housing at 2:30PM

Support

- Absolutely – Students without cars, international students
 - May not know how to use system
 - Travel training (past)
 - MU willing to promote as resource

- Grad Students
 - o “Where can I live and easily get to school”
- Differences among undergraduates - More marketing to both undergraduates and graduates
- Apartment complexes use their own shuttle service
 - o 40-60% residents use shuttle
 - o 30-minute frequency (15-minutes there, 15 minutes back) with one bus
 - o TIGER bus was previously pretty direct

Vision

- More service throughout more of the day
 - o To go shopping when not studying
 - o Bar routes
 - o Get to entertainment (movie theater)
 - Currently served by Tiger Line
- Would love to take a bus to work, except the kids...
- Marketing opportunities (low carbon foot print, etc)
- Online trip planner (not there now)
 - o “How to make that first trip easier”
- Bus stops
 - o Next bus info
 - o Bus stops difficult to see
- Students would use it but don't know how
- Make marketing material available
- Education is important
- Jobs (student jobs)
- Service to those who need it the most- (usage/ridership)

Potential Improvements

- Student Jobs
- Dense housing areas (Clark Lane)
 - o Higher density of jobs or people

Performance

- Busses with WIFI (because of prevalence of tablets, smart phones and cell phones and companies moving away from unlimited data plans)

Convenience

- In summer, most apartments give up shuttle service
 - o Leaves students stranded
 - o Need closer proximity to stops – Opportunity to park closer

- Benches
 - On Providence Road (danger, high speeds, 5 lanes of 50 mph traffic) which is state highway (US-163)
- Make navigating the system easier
 - Don't know the app exists/how to use it
 - Additional landmarks on maps and apps
- COMO Connect/apartment coordinate on travel
- Education: Getting people to take the first ride
- Group ride activities
- Lots of students from areas with no public transit
- Video explaining how to use transit
 - How to pay
 - Apple pay
 - Mobile payments
- Challenge of using cash

Biggest opportunity

- Education/travel training tailored to target audiences
- Apartments complexes to help pay for a special route

Funding

- MU limited on how much it can raise fees
- More collaboration with apartment complexes

Other

- Apartment shuttles are residents only

Discussion 8 – Transit/Paratransit at 4PM

Perception for improving transit

- Long trip times - Public/students
 - Yes, support to improve
- When needed, it becomes priority
 - Specifically to medical: must be on time but may not know return time
 - People want to be individualized: If too long, call someone else
 - Busses are accessible for wheelchairs
 - Yes; support
- Many calls (re: long rides, many PT complaints) – Transfer point timing not working
 - People supported but trips are longer – Called city council
- Orange Line – One marked crosswalk; walk signals are not working
 - Other – Potential customers –Not served

Vision

- Financial Means – Raise service – Connect to attract people, raise rider swap
- Connections for public transportation are not realistic
- Intermodal connections – Creative, e.g. Uber

Service Priority

- Serve all people
- Do we have enough money to make it work?
- Outlying communities, e.g. Hallsville - commuter service - demand there
 - o Peak service – Still stuck in traffic.
 - o To major employers (MU hospitals, etc)
 - o Funding – Fast Act - new programs

Performance

- I 600/I 700 Broadway (600 trips month)
- Transfers – Culture
- Marketing opportunities for IT in place
- Travel training
- Regular riders lost service
- Jefferson City reverse commute
- Greyhound available today

Improve Convenience

- Tried to do it with neighborhood routes (every route has access to grocery, bank, medical)

Funding

- No raise on public transportation fees
 - o Public Private Partnership – Employee benefit (MU example)
- City employees – Commute pas benefit
- Ashland park-and-ride to MU
- Cost of driver retention raise pay but is it cheaper than turnover
 - o Accidents – Public perceptions
- Paraplan – Look at scheduling software – Efficiencies (55% in ridership)
 - o Pay more than COMO, have benefits – Population challenge

Other

- Greenway

- Service for independent living – 40 FTE (20% not reliable transportation)
- PTAC
- Public Safety
- Peers- Lawrence and Champaign: culture different (Columbia wants vehicles)
- KC<x>STL
- Look at bus stops in other areas
- Must be more convenient to be successful

Discussion 9 – Public Transit Advisory Committee (PTAC) at 5:30PM

Initial Thoughts

- Previous surveys – Concerns about burnout
 - o Time burden
 - o Faith in process – Already gave input: What is different?
- Today's meeting: lots of the same faces from initial outreach efforts, including new PTAC members
- End of process: will there be specific PTAC recommendations? Yes.
 - o Asked specifically for this during consultant team selection
- Roles of consultant team members
- Is there a recommendation that the team could give the City to better connect to the county, so they are served too?
- Have Mid-MO ride coordination

Group No. 1

- Recommendations for PTAC**
 - o Looking outside city boundaries
 - o City Manager
 - o OATS – Now
- Experience**
 - o Ann Marie – Served for independent living: rider full-time/part-time
 - o Rachel – Bike/Ped- bike rider
 - o Sarah – Central action – Mobility management/agencies
 - 8 counties
 - o Cheryl – PTAC chair – Part-time/full-time Rider
 - o Glenn – City Manager offices – Year pass, test the system
 - Customer service – Good/system – Headways/loops
 - o Anne – Board Member/CNCA Board – Rider, scooter
 - Part-time/full-time rider – Good
 - Raise transfers/no shelters, etc
 - o Cathy – Comm. on PTAC, transit/bike user; gave up car
 - Transfer challenges
 - Great drivers
 - Safety at bus stops

- Longer hours
 - Gold Line late
 - Providence Road stop
 - Dianne – Columbia College Representative – Second meeting
 - Worked with Ian (peers)
 - Transfer stations accessible
- **Service Priority**
 - Combination
 - Try choice
 - Those who need
 - Higher density areas
- **Improvements**
 - Timing of transfers
 - Marketing of service
 - More frequent service
- **Challenge**
 - Funding
- **Opportunity**
 - MU/Parking/Culture
- **Other**
 - Previous trips/visits
 - 2014- 3 in 1
 - Political relationships
 - Must coordinate
 - City/County relationships
 - MU/City/County
 - Land use planning
 - Must have transit at the table
 - Environment/Energy
 - Intercity Service – Columbia/Jefferson City
 - County rep on PTAC
 - Smaller

Group No. 2

- **Perceptions of Transit**
 - Buses are too dirty
 - Trips are too long
 - Students do not know many routes, not well publicized, not cool to ride bus, does not serve my home, needs to be more on time, and not too long
 - General dissatisfaction moving away from hub and spoke system – Longer trips, exposed to the elements
 - On the plus side, we may have greater coverage to periphery
 - Driving is easy; commutes are short
 - Need incentives to draw more drivers
 - Political support? No.

- Sensitivity issue – People not caring
- Students: Why should I care if I do not use transit?
- Non-rider perception: nobody rides the bus – Waste of money – Should be disbanded (small but vocal minority)
- Mizzou survey – 45,000 responses (faculty, under, graduate)
 - Over 50% willing to try other modes
 - For faculty and staff 90% currently commute alone - 30% willing to try alternatives
- Marginalized populations greatly affected by poor service.
 - Late buses = Lost employment/income (long loop routes can be slow)
- ATED group – One or two choices for mobility
 - Resources are more invested/impacted by transit
- St. Joseph – Implemented hub and spoke system from scratch
 - How did they develop community/political capital to support this?
 - Look into it – May be a good example
- **Vision**
 - Living within financial means
 - MoDOT FASTACT increased funding, matching funds 50/50 - Need local dollars to access federal dollars
 - Partnerships (public/private) to access federal capital
 - More service (time and place)
 - Successful systems try to target high volume routes, compress system to provide better service
 - Some areas lost service when we tried to compress last time
 - Areas on the periphery still need service
 - Lots of complaints about loss of curbside main entrance service at shopping centers, high ridership on Ash Street
 - Strategic, innovative, responsive to students, transit dependent populations
 - Out on Nifong current stops are dangerous for families and wheelchair users
 - Data to support decisions: Green (light green) Line not conducive for many commuters in that area
- **Everybody or those who need it most?**
 - Close threshold riders – Those that can be easily converted
 - Families considering dropping a car
 - Might just need a little push or a plan with a little structure
 - MU has a van pool from Boonville
 - MU to MU North commuter route
 - Park-n-ride to capture riders further out
 - Service personnel – Might need expanded service hours
 - Low income residents
 - Laura Holland – Holiday Inn: Employees are transit dependent and sometimes route schedule does not support these employees
 - Buses are a driver of the economy
 - Holiday shopping route in the evenings?
 - Special event services – Tiger Football

- Target contracts with bus service in first weeks of school to provide students access to the store
- **Service Performance**
 - Prathersville Road, Rice Road – Cheaper housing but poor access to public transit: Similar around other areas
 - Stop by Mozer's (on Brown School Road) can be moved to Murray's to catch more riders
 - Southern California – Light rail transit built to support people living on fringe for affordable housing: Now supports 30% of commuters
 - Use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to layer inputs and identify high priority areas
 - Can we map/identify low-income, high need individuals and families, especially on the edge?
 - Several felons in the community: need jobs and are dependent on reliable transportation
 - Add Sunday service – People want to get out on Sundays
 - Some buses might be too big for the route they serve, adds to perception of “no one rides”
 - Need high-tech, wired buses – Add to rider experience and productivity
 - Add bike and wheelchair access on buses; currently capped at two of each
 - People seem happier with consistent hours Monday-Saturday
 - Student perception that buses do not run long enough for late classes and/or social engagements, so they rule it out as an option: ONLY TAKES ONE TIME
 - Students already take private mass transit
 - Many students not happy – Stop at 7 p.m., run late, no seats.
 - Every 60 minutes, 90 minutes (student private buses)
 - Better capacity, more frequent intervals
 - COMO app does not always work, not always accurate, sometimes delayed, cell connection can cause lag
 - We spend resources to train and certify drivers but they leave quickly for better pay: Need competitive wages, bonuses, etc.
- **Biggest Challenge**
 - Funding
 - Community buy-in. Need to be confident we can ask for increases in funding and they will support it - Property taxes are hard to pass
 - Decrease in revenue from online sales
 - Cutting down on car – First mentality
 - State law prohibits City buses from providing contract services to public schools
 - Chicago kids ride CTA buses; in other countries there are no “school buses” – Kids just take the bus
 - Lots of Columbians are not used to having quality public transportation system and the benefits it provides
 - Does redistricting impact potential for public transportation to support public school transportation?

- Funding
 - Do not call it taxes – Call it public investments
 - Regional transportation districts
 - Low cost rapid implementation
 - Demographic overlaps to determine more accurate coverage

Discussion 10 – Council representatives Thomas and Nauser at 5:30PM

Familiarity

- Mixed familiarity
 - Ian knows it well
 - Laura is less familiar
- Need to involve students – Social media will help
- Need to involve senior citizens, especially Ward 5
 - Different engagement methods

Perception

- Not much support in Ward 5
- Not much ridership or interest in funding increase
- Not focused on social benefit – More concern about taxes and fees (more suburban-oriented)
 - Rely on automobiles (low density)
- Ian – Very involved in transportation reform
 - Better approach to community mobility
 - The goal: Transit is better than driving
- A lot of people do not have a choice
- Limited service coverage and hours drive people to choose the private auto
- Social and environmental benefits
- Gathered signatures from 2,000 people for better transit

Funding

- Need to question some of the “can’ts”, especially with MU student transportation fees
- MU is changing a lot – Possible opportunities
- More service, less congestion, maintenance, costs, etc

Political Support

- Minimal support from (university, chamber of commerce)
- Council is generally supportive
- Desire to see it become more self-sufficient
- Has been a council topic a lot lately

- Chamber of commerce/economic. development folks do not focus on this or connect the dots between transit and economical development
 - o May be growing awareness but not a high priority

Vision

- Ian – Connected network, shorter times, more coverage
- Laura hears a lot about evening/weekend service, living within financial means
- Boise, ID struggles with similar issues – Have put most resources in high priority routes and subsidizing other service delivery modes – Taxi's, Uber

Service Priorities

- Productivity over coverage
 - o Concentrate on rider-rich areas of town
 - o Still look for low-cost opportunities to serve less dense areas
 - o How do you balance call-a-ride with taxi?
 - Not direct competition, but private services can supplement the system

Improvements

- Look at designs that do not involve loops or at least try bi-directional loops
 - o The system can be confusing, especially with transfers
- Lots of people like the smartphone app and are using it
- Would be great to have that screen on the bus
 - o Could show riders where connecting routes are at
- Having arrival information at bus stops
- Marketing right now is good
- Without spending more money, getting more riders is hard – Must reduce/replace loop routes with direct main line back and forth
- Need better bus stops – Increase comfort, e.g. via protection from the elements
- Are we surveying/involving larger employers?
 - o Many will not participate without providing a carrot or a stick

Funding Opportunities

- Percent increase in sales tax funding
- Sales tax increase not feasible
- Property tax did not get great response
- Need university buy-in – Then we might get something on community side
- Increase bus ridership, decrease maintenance, and invest in bus
- Fare-free service?
 - o More efficient, quicker service
 - o May not have as big of an impact on operating expenses as people may think

- Missoula, MT does this – May pay with utility tax

Biggest Challenge

- Money – Requires more education
- Show value through productive service
- Address densifying neighborhoods
 - Serve current riders, but prepare for growth
- Look at transit buy-in in lieu of parking minimums, especially for student housing
- Change expectations, esp. W.R.T. parking

Connection Points

- Some connection points aren't time points
- Neighborhood routes – Some are very loose – Sitting and stopping
- Find a way to get university on board
 - Roll funding into parking fee transportation fee

Discussion II – PTAC Debrief/Review at 7:30PM

Stakeholders Meetings

- Is the university involved? Yes.
- Is the main consultant contact is Tom Worker-Braddock (Olsson Associates)? Yes.

Relationship with University

- MU's growing (in terms of facilities not students) – Focusing on building research facilities as better use of existing spaces (parking lot) – Needs relationship with city, etc
 - No raise in student fee for transportation – Not on the table
 - U-passes (opt in option) are better than raised fee
 - Gives transit at reduced cost, so a pass is on table
 - Has hospital on campus – Affects demand on parking
 - Parking study is all preliminary – Have not talked to students about U-pass option
 - Only 36% of all enrolled students bought transit passes
 - Ninety percent of those drive vehicles to school – Great demographic for public transit – What incentive is needed and how does ridership potential match up with where workers live? (In proximity to campus)
 - 1-2 hour commutes (park and ride with express rate)
 - 1,200 workers work at MU and 70% responded to survey
- Idea – Park-and-ride that is integrated into transportation oriented development

- Recent (2015/2016) parking audit by Smart Growth America recommended creation of a “parking commission”
 - Contact Leah Christian in City Manager’s office
- Would St. Joseph service improvements example be helpful to Columbia?
 - Elaborate on St. Joseph project involving flex service, etc.
- Have experience riding bikes - Lots of college age drivers
- Can be expensive
- Results of elected officials’ stakeholder meetings?
 - Meet with candidates for elections?
 - Mayor is almost out of office
- Has there been increase in ridership since allowing the rides to those 18 and under? No.
- Would like more targeting to seniors
- Fare boxes do not always work
- St. Louis subway has honor system and security that randomly checks for paid fares
- What can PTAC do to help?
- Note: Ask Drew for list of commission and PTAC contacts for e-blasts and social media posts
- Focus on minority populations
- Coordination with new zoning ordinance update – See online
- Will utility bill inserts be used for project communications?
- Utility as funding option

Other

- What is the study team’s initial impression of doing what was done in Lawrence here in Columbia?
- Combining/coordinating city system with KU system?
- Previous peer commuters:
 - Ames
 - Lawrence
 - Champaign/Urbana
 - Other
 - Determined by mayor
 - Also visited these cities