

Legislation Details (With Text)

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| Attachments: | 1. Demand Response Transit Ridership Data | | |

| Date | Ver. | Action By | Action | Result |
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Discussion - Transit

Issue/Request:

Discuss current transit and potential transit service improvements.

Key Issues:

- Existing transit services and ridership (annual review)
- Fixed Route from Independence, MO (Independence Transit Center)
- Fixed Route from Kansas City, MO (3-Trails Transit Center)
- Potential Service Operations
- Adding fixed route service will increase the City's annual cost by at least \$210,000 per year
- Cost sharing among local shares and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding
- Service Agreements

Background:

Lee's Summit offers two transit services. Lee's Summit has a commuter express transit service (RideKC - Lee's Summit Express) that operates daily, Monday thru Friday, from a park and ride lot located near the intersection of Chipman Road and US 50 Highway and another demand response transit service (RideKC - Lee's Summit) that also operates Monday thru Friday within the City limits of Lee's Summit.

The commuter express transit service operates between Lee's Summit and downtown Kansas City, MO with four bus trips in the morning and four bus trips in the evening. This service principally provides work-related commute trips during the week. There has not been any service change in several years and ridership has remained steady and balanced with available vehicle and parking capacities. The fare for this service has also been unchanged in several years; a trip costs \$3.00 (with options for reduced fare considering monthly passes and other situations). The fare structure is consistent with recommendations by KCATA. Staff has not received any complaints with regard to this service in 2018. Staff has received requests for additional transit options between communities and within the City to serve more work-based commuter trips.

The demand transit service operates within the City Limits and includes service to Truman Medical Center - Lakewood. This service requires advance reservation and principally provides non-work based trips during the week (e.g. medical appointments, shopping, errand, MCC-Longview classes, etc.). Hours of operation range from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Ridership is not restricted based on age or ability. The demand transit service fare structure is currently \$1.50 per trip and generally matches the fare structure of RideKC throughout the metro area. KCATA does not intend to adjust the regional fare structure in 2019.

A Transit Study for Lee's Summit was completed most recently in 2015/16 that resulted in significant changes to the demand response transit service implemented in the Spring of 2017 within Lee's Summit (e.g. RideKC Lee's Summit, operated by OATS). Since these demand response transit service changes were implemented in the Spring of 2017 (April 1), there has been an approximate 30% increase in ridership on RideKC Lee's Summit (compared to the former combined services of OATS and KCATA MetroFlex) and the cost of service has been maintained at or near the projected expense for previous services combined. Along with the increase in ridership, there has been an increase in denied services due to capacity limits. Staff has not received numerous complaints regarding the denied services. Staff has received a few requests for service changes that include service beyond the City Limits and weekend operations. These type of changes to service would have a significant cost impact to expand the transit fleet and operator availability.

In addition to those transit service recommendations in the study which were implemented to create RideKC Lee's Summit, fixed route services other than the existing Lee's Summit Express (a park and ride commuter service to downtown Kansas City) were considered. Similarly, the KCATA and Mid-America Regional Council continue to develop regional transit strategies/plans. Among those plans, the Eastern Jackson County Transit Plan and MARC Smart Moves 3.0 recommend new or extended fixed route(s) into Lee's Summit.

A new route is proposed between the 3-Trails Transit Center (located at Bannister and Blue Ridge/Cerner in Kansas City, MO) and downtown Lee's Summit, with a stop at MCC-Longview. A route extension (with revised service schedule) is proposed between the Independence Transit Center (located at Truman and Noland, downtown Independence, MO) and downtown Lee's Summit, with stops at TMC-Lakewood and St. Luke's East hospitals. The existing route from Independence follows Lee's Summit Road with service to TMC-Lakewood on a limited schedule. Both routes would likely operate Monday thru Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on an hourly schedule.

The current budget for existing transit services is described below:

RideKC Lee's Summit (Demand Response Transit) - Est. \$213,000

RideKC Lee's Summit Express (Commuter Transit to Downtown KCMO) - Est. \$104,000

Total Estimated FY19 "Existing" Transit Service Cost - Est. \$317,000 Funded from Local Transportation Sales Tax. This amount of local funds provides the match for use of allocated federal transit funds. The local share is approximately 40%-45% of the total cost of service.

The cost of service for the two aforementioned potential fixed routes and operation is conceptually:

Independence Transit Center Connection - \$325,000: Negotiate split/shared cost with Kansas City, MO (\$162,500). Apply Lee's Summit's FTA Funding (Section 5307 operating funds at 50% match) to Lee's Summit's share of service cost with a local cost of approximately \$81,250.

3-Trails Transit Center Connection - \$525,000: Negotiate split/shared cost with Kansas City, MO (\$262,500). After Lee's Summit's FTA Funding is applied to Lee's Summit's share of service cost, the local cost is approximately \$131,250.

The total conceptual cost to Lee's Summit's local share of both transit services is \$212,500. This amount would be in addition to the existing cost of transit (as it too may be adjusted for 2019). The Lee's Summit Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Funding (Section 5307) has unallocated capacity to support all of the costs noted above. However, there is no identified source of local funds for this additional expense. The City's existing transit services have been funded annually from the Transportation Sales Tax after FTA funding is applied. The Transportation Sales Tax, which is also the source of funding for pavement, curb, markings and bridge maintenance, does not have adequate capacity to absorb the additional costs without redistribution of program allocations and priorities.

Impact/Analysis:

City Council response and direction to staff regarding the following questions could have significant impact to transit and associated budget in Lee's Summit:

Is the City Council interested in any transit service changes for 2019 (e.g. new routes, additional hours/days of operation, expanded boundary of operation, fare increase/decrease, fleet modifications)?

If transit changes are proposed by City Council that increase cost of service, what source of funds should be considered?

Other Information/Unique Characteristics:

Transit contracts will be presented to City Council for consideration in the coming months for renewal of existing services and potential service improvements based on the City Council direction.

Michael Park, PE, PTOE, City Traffic Engineer

Recommendation: [Enter Recommendation Here]