
Section 2: Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

This section described efforts to determine the broad goals and priorities for transit in Manhattan and the rest of the region. In 2001, the stated purpose of the transit system was to serve people without access to cars. In 2010, that may still be a prime goal but there could be other issues as well. Generally, it will be important to determine what community needs should be served by transit. These needs became goals and were discerned through key person interviews and general public input.

2.1 Community Input

The rest of this section documents a series of stakeholder interviews which were intended to help determine the broad goals and priorities for transit in Manhattan and the rest of the region. In addition, this section documents a public meeting that was held in December of 2009 which sought input on the future direction of transit in Manhattan. The 2001 transit implementation plan stated that the purpose of the transit system was to serve people without access to cars. For this update to the 2001 plan it was deemed important to determine what community needs should be served by transit and to test the earlier assumption. These needs will become goals for transit in the plan update.

2.1.1 Stakeholder Interviews

In late January 2010, TranSystems/HDR conducted key person interviews through five small group meetings with:

- Kansas State University (KSU) planning and administration officials,
- Members of KSU's Student Governing Association and other student organizations,
- Representatives of the Human Resource Management Network (HRMN),
- Representatives of various local social service agencies including Pawnee Mental Health Services, Big Lakes Developmental Center and Shepherd's Crossing, and
- US Army officials at Fort Riley.

The meetings were held at various locations in the City of Manhattan and at Fort Riley.

The interviews were structured utilizing an interview outline developed by TranSystems/HDR and approved by the City. Each interview session was about one hour in duration. A copy of the interview guide and agenda are included in Appendix A. Approximately one week prior to the meetings, invited participants received background material consisting of the agenda indicating the meeting topics, a summary of the 2001 transit plan, and an overview of the current transit study update.

With the exception of the Fort Riley group, the interviews generally followed this basic agenda:

General Challenges & Opportunities Facing your Group in the next 3 to 5 years

This topic attempted to focus on what each group saw as its primary challenges and opportunities. The conversation attempted to not focus solely on transit issues but rather on broader concerns of the groups.

Is Manhattan Ready for Transit? If so, who should it serve?

The groups were asked their opinion about transit for the City of Manhattan and the surrounding area. If the group generally responded positively on this question, then they were asked about the primary markets for the service.

Review and comment on the 2001 Plan

The 2001 service plan was discussed and participants were asked to comment. The conversations generally involved reviewing the route maps of the citywide system (two primary routes plus a Bramlage shuttle) as well as the map for the Aggieville Special.

Closing Remarks/Next Steps

This topic gave people the opportunity to raise issues about transit that perhaps had not been covered to that point in the interview. Questions regarding possible funding for a future system were discussed as part of this topic.

The Fort Riley interview was handled somewhat differently as basic information about the Fort's travel needs was deemed more important than discerning broader goals of the US Army. The 2001 plan, focusing on Manhattan service, did not include the Fort as a destination. As such, evaluation of the 2001 plan by Fort Riley personnel was not seen as vital at the interview.

2.1.2 Public Meeting

On December 2, 2009, a general public meeting was held in Manhattan to solicit input regarding the study to update the 2001 Transit Implementation Plan. Twenty people signed in as attendees. A brief presentation regarding both the 2001 plan and the update was made. In addition, printed summaries of both the 2001 plan and the current study were given to each attendee, along with a six-question survey. Fifteen people completed the questionnaire. Further, members of KSU's student media were present.

2.2 Summary of Stakeholder Interviews and Public Input

Appendix B contains a summary of each of the stakeholder interview sessions. This section attempts to synthesize all of the interviews to discern common themes. In addition, input from the public meeting held in December 2009 is summarized in this section.

2.2.1 Summary of Stakeholder Interviews

Challenges & Opportunities Facing Stakeholders

Overwhelmingly, the most common issue facing all groups was *dwindling financial resources*.

- Virtually all groups were struggling with either increasing costs of fulfilling their organizational missions in addition to less funding or revenue to sustain their operations.
- KSU students were concerned about the increasing cost of college education and the challenges faced with accessing employment to help fund their education. On-campus job opportunities, often a mainstay of student employment, have become scarce as the university has had to grapple with funding reductions.
- KSU administrative representatives voiced issues regarding increasing demands for university services (housing, parking, and operations) while state funding has been reduced. There was a resistance to increasing tuition and other fees.
- Social service agencies expressed increased demand for their services while their resources to deliver these services have been curtailed.
- Employers as represented by HRMN expressed challenges faced by the current economic climate.
- The Fort has infrastructure needs relating to roads and parking. These issues will be further strained as the Army brigades return to the Fort following overseas deployment.

Is Manhattan Ready for Transit? If so, who should it serve?

All groups indicated that transit would be a valued amenity to the community. A transit system would serve a wide range of possible users including KSU faculty, staff and students, civilians and soldiers at the Fort, as well as employees, economically disadvantaged people, and persons with disabilities.

Review and comment on the 2001 Plan

All groups, except Fort Riley, generally thought the 2001 plan served the needs of the community. Certain growth areas of the community (such as Scenic Drive and north of Marlatt Avenue) need to be considered as well as service to the airport and hotels along US-24 (East Poyntz Avenue). Two groups thought Manhattan Avenue on the east side of campus needed to be better served. The Fort Riley group was not asked to comment on the 2001 plan because service to the Fort was not part of that plan.

Closing Remarks/Next Steps

Funding of transit was a topic usually discussed as part of the closing remarks. No group thought new funding sources for transit were currently feasible, although the KSU students thought a voluntary semester pass might be offered along with a request for short-term funding from the City/KSU fund.

2.2.2 Summary of Public Input

As previously mentioned, attendees were asked to fill out a questionnaire regarding transit in the Manhattan area as part of a public meeting on December 2, 2009.

Key results from the completed questionnaires indicate:

- Strong support for transit.
- Service to K-State, Manhattan Town Center and the Tuttle Creek Boulevard area were top destinations to be served by transit.
- A transit system should be jointly operated by the university and the City.
- K-State students, faculty and staff as well as people without cars are key markets.
- A fare of \$0.50 to \$1.00 per ride was a common choice.

A tabulation of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix C.

2.3 Transit Service Goals and Service Objectives

This section discusses goals for a transit system as well as service objectives. The goals are intended to determine who should be served and where service should be operated. Service objectives are intended to help define how those services would be designed and operated.

2.3.1 Transit Service Goals

One of the objectives of the stakeholder interviews and the meeting with the general public was to define the goals of transit in light of broader community issues. The premise is that transit can best serve the community if it helps address community issues or challenges. Table 1 relates the challenges faced by each stakeholder group (with KSU students and administration being combined) to a role that transit might play to address those challenges. While a role for transit is proposed to address a given issue, it is not intended to suggest that transit is the only solution or even a major solution; rather, it is intended to suggest that transit can be part of a larger set of actions. For example,

a solution to increased demand for student housing at KSU is to build more dormitories. However, until that solution can reach fruition, transit could be helpful in providing access to housing off campus that widens the housing options for students.

In reviewing the connection of a transit role to community issues, the following short-term and long-term goals (not in any order of priority) were suggested for the transit system:

Goal 1: *Serve KSU students, faculty, and staff by connecting the campus with residential, commercial and employment locations.*

- International students and their dependents appear to have acute needs compared with those of the general student population.

Goal 2: *Serve Fort Riley commuters (civilians and military) and dependents with service locations off the post (such as Manhattan and Junction City) as well as general circulation on the post.*

Goal 3: *Serve social service needs of the area by addressing transportation needs of economically disadvantaged people and older people, as well as persons with disabilities, by providing access to social services, employment and commercial areas.*

Goal 4: *Support businesses of the area by providing access to employment for low- and moderate-wage earning employees, transportation access from the Manhattan Regional Airport, and to and from hotels in Manhattan.*

2.3.2 *Service Objectives*

Service objectives are intended to guide the development and evaluation of alternatives to address one or more of the goals. The objectives will also be helpful in setting priorities for a transit system, thus determining which goals or portions of goals are implemented in the short term and which are implemented in the long term.

The service goals relate to the following areas which form the basis of service objectives:

- *Markets served* - include each of the markets addressed in the goals which include KSU students, faculty, and staff, Ft. Riley personnel, economically disadvantaged people, older people and persons with disabilities.
- *Access to employment and commercial areas* - frequently commercial areas (such as retail establishments) are also places of employment. These areas would also include the KSU campus and the Manhattan Regional Airport. The employment and commercial areas would be tied to the markets being targeted by the transit service.
- *Access to residential areas* - these would be areas relative to the target markets to be served.
- *Cost of service* - this would relate to the relative cost in terms of riders per unit of service as well as the total or absolute cost. This is important, as the area has varying levels of resources for transit and may need to set priorities.
- *Span of service* - the length of the service day (when service begins and when it ends). It will be vital that the transit service accesses important locations at times that are convenient to the target market.
- *Frequency of service* – *this relates to how often service can be accessed by the market being served.* The frequency needs to be sufficient to be attractive to the audience under consideration.

Table 1: Stakeholder Challenges and Possible Transit Role

Stakeholder Group	Challenges	Possible Transit Role
KSU*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased demand for student housing Increase demand for parking International students limited mobility options Costs for attending college for students Dwindling on-campus jobs for students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to off-campus housing Reduce demand for parking Provide access to employment and commercial areas for all students (provides opportunity for off-campus employment as well as provide income to help pay for college).
Fort Riley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-post road improvements as well as need for increased capacity at post gates. On-post parking Dependents of military personnel need on-post transportation and transportation to off post-locations (primarily Junction City and sometimes Manhattan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide commuter service to reduce need for road expansion and parking. Provide access to employment and commercial areas for post dependents.
Social agencies	<p>Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing demand for services, less funding to provide Getting clients to jobs (lack of transportation and child care). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to employment and commercial areas as well as social service agencies.
Employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Airport access for visitors; access to community from hotels Access to workforce that hold low/moderate paying jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to employment and commercial areas including the airport and hotels.

*KSU challenges represent the combination of student and administration interview comments.