

KCATA NEWS RELEASE / AUG. 11, 2003

KANSAS CITY AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

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CITY COUNCIL PLACES TRANST TAX PROPOSAL ON NOVEMBER BALLOT

The Kansas City, Mo., City Council has unanimously approved a transit tax ballot measure that, if approved in November, would prevent severe reductions in Metro bus service. Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (ATA) officials are preparing two budgets for 2004—one for each possible outcome of the Nov. 4 election.

If voters pass the three-eighths cent sales tax proposal, it will generate approximately \$22 million a year, enabling the ATA to preserve current bus service levels. Furthermore, the additional funding would allow for some modest service enhancements, including increased schedule frequency and extended service hours on some existing routes, as well as the possible creation of 10 new routes in areas where bus service is now unavailable.

The ATA will unveil its plans in the event of a “yes” vote Nov. 4, during the next ATA Board of Commissioners meeting. The ATA Board’s Aug. 20 meeting convenes at 2 p.m. in the Large Conference Room of the Breen Building, 1200 E. 18th St., Kansas City, Mo.

The three-eighths cent sales tax will be collected five years, April 1, 2004, through March 31, 2009.

Without the increased revenue from this tax, the ATA will be confronted with a \$12 million shortfall in 2004. A “no” vote Nov. 4 will force the ATA to offset that deficit through a 20- to 25-percent cut in Metro service. The service reductions would take effect January 2004.

“We have to finalize plans for service cuts, but we certainly hope we won’t have to implement those plans,” ATA General Manager Mark Huffer said.

ATA officials held a series of public meetings in July to discuss preliminary service reduction plans, which called for eliminating some routes entirely, less frequent service on most other routes and reduced weeknight service. Saturday night and all Sunday service could also face complete elimination or, at a minimum, significant cutbacks.

About 300 people attended the six public meetings. More than 110 sent e-mails to metro@kcata.org, and another

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85 left voice-mail comments on special phone line the ATA created, (816) 346-0300.

“We’re adjusting our plans based on the public input,” said ATA Planning/Special Services Director Mark Swope. “Sunday service is important to people. The challenge is maintaining some Sunday service would mean cutting service at other times also important to people.

“What one must understand is that \$12 million represents about 21 percent of the ATA’s operational budget. There’s no way to make a cut that deep without it affecting people’s lives.”

Other ATA cost-cutting efforts would include laying off between 120 and 150 ATA employees, reductions in Share-A-Fare service and the elimination of both the Chiefs and Royals Express.

Employee wages were frozen at the end of 2001.

The ATA’s main emphasis is on saving as much weekday rush-hour service as possible. Eighty-two percent of Metro customers use the service during the weekday rush hours, for job-related trips, according to surveys conducted aboard buses.

“Compare our operating budget of \$56 million with the operating budgets of the transit agencies serving similar-sized cities,” Huffer said. “Cincinnati’s is \$113 million, St. Louis’ \$140 million, Minneapolis’ \$170 million. Without additional revenue, our budget drops into the low-\$40 million range.

“That’ll put us about par with El Paso, Texas, and Akron, Ohio. We’ll just be ahead of Omaha and Des Moines.”

Current Missouri state statutes prohibit seeking any type of county-wide or regional transit tax for Greater Kansas City.

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KCATA NEWS RELEASE / APRIL 30, 2003

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ATA NOW OFFERING FULLY AUTOMATED TRIP PLANNING PROGRAM ONLINE

As she used the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's (ATA) new online trip planning program for the first time, an enthused Tracey Myers, who commutes to her job at the University of Missouri-Kansas City on The Metro, declared, "This rocks."

The fully automated *eTrip Planner*, now available 24/7 at www.kcata.org, permits anyone anywhere to plan trips aboard the ATA's Metro buses. Myers, a lifelong Metro customer, literally applauded the program, clapping her hands as *eTrip Planner* almost instantly generated her trip plan. She marveled at the detail packed into the plan: Metro Stop locations... bus route names and numbers... schedules... overall travel time... estimated walking distance...

"*eTrip Planner* can even tell you what shoes to wear," said Myers. "If it tells you you'll have to do a lot of walking between bus stops, that also tells you this is not the day you want to wear those high heels."

With the launch of *eTrip Planner*, the ATA joins just a handful of transit agencies in the nation providing an automated trip planning option through its website. The program taps into the same schedule and route database the ATA's Regional Call Center agents utilize when planning bus trips for callers.

"Now anyone anywhere—a UMKC student or a business executive in Boston, for example—can go online anytime and plan their trips on The Metro in just seconds," said ATA General Manager Mark Huffer. "In designing the program, we've tried to make *eTrip Planner* as user-friendly as possible. It takes only a few keystrokes and a couple of mouse clicks."

eTrip Planner users respond to four questions—Where are you starting? Where are you going? When are you traveling? What options would you like?—then click "Plan My Trip." Trip plans can be adjusted to account for the fastest overall travel time, fewest transfers or the shortest walking distance. The modified trip plans are produced within a few seconds.

Jayn Baker expects *eTrip Planner* to simplify her job as a rideshare coordinator for Hallmark Cards, Inc.

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“It is self-explanatory and very simple,” said Baker, who rides The Metro regularly. “I have employees who ask about using the bus, and now I can refer them to *eTrip Planner*.”

The development of the web program, Myers said, represents the ATA’s responsiveness to a May 2002 focus group in which she participated.

“Among the things we emphasized in that focus group was making the bus system easier to use. This does that,” Myers said.

The *eTrip Planner* has been under development for almost two years. The ATA’s Information Technology Department created the computer program, with input from the Marketing and Scheduling departments. A federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant has funded the project.

“*eTrip Planner* demonstrates that the ATA is moving forward, using technology to better serve our customers,” Huffer stated. “Developing the program proved to be a complicated process, but successful in that those who are using *eTrip Planner* are finding it to be quick, easy and accurate.”

KANSAS CITY AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

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eTrip Planner CLICK FOR HELP

1 WHERE ARE YOU STARTING?

Address or intersection:
(For example: 1200 E 18th St
or Forest & E 18th St)

City:

[Choose a landmark by category](#)
[Show me a list of landmarks](#)
[Choose a Park-and-Ride](#)
[Show me a list of Park-and-Rides](#)

2 WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

SCHOOLS

Select a landmark from this list:

[Type an address or intersection](#)
[Show me a list of landmarks](#)
[Choose a Park-and-Ride](#)
[Choose a different landmark category](#)

3 WHEN ARE YOU TRAVELING?

My starting time My arrival time will be : AM

Date:

4 WHAT OPTIONS WOULD YOU LIKE?

I prefer a trip that:

- is quickest.
- requires the least amount of walking.
- has the fewest transfers.

More than one trip option may be available.

How important is it that you travel exactly at the time indicated in question 3?

- I must leave or arrive at that time.
- I have some flexibility with my trip. If the trip planner can find a trip that requires less travel time or fewer transfers, show me that trip plan.

PLAN MY TRIP!

Visit www.kcata.org and click on the “Trip Planner” button, which takes one directly to this page. Answer the four simple questions and click “Plan My Trip.”

KANSAS CITY AREA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

eTrip Planner [CLICK FOR HELP](#)

YOUR TRIP PLAN

This plan is for travel on Thursday, 05/22/2003.
Your trip will take approximately 1 hour and 3 minutes.
You will have one transfer.
Estimated total walking distance is 0.26 miles.

Depart: NW 70TH ST AND PRAIRIE VIEW, KANSAS CITY MO at 8:24 AM
Arrive: UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI KANSAS CITY, KANSAS CITY MO at 9:27 AM

	At 8:24 AM	Walk to stop on Prairie View at 70th Southbound, Kansas City MO (1 min.).
	At 8:25 AM	Take Bus route 129 -I-29 Express (Metro). At 8:47 Am, arrive at stop on 10th at Baltimore Eastbound, Kansas City MO (22 min.).
	At 8:47 AM	Walk to stop on 12th at Main Eastbound, Kansas City MO for transfer.
	At 8:55 AM	Take Bus route 25 -Troost (Metro). At 9:26 Am, arrive at stop on Troost at 51st Southbound, Kansas City MO (31 min.). Trip note: Internal Revenue Service Trip
	At 9:26 AM	Walk to University of Missouri Kansas CITY. Arrive at 9:27 AM (1 min.).

[Show More Details](#)

Please visit www.kcata.org closer to your time of travel. Schedules may change between now and the time of your planned trip.

MORE OPTIONS

- [Plan a trip with a later arrival](#)
- [Plan a trip with an earlier arrival](#)
- [Display times for starting point](#)
- [Display times for destination](#)

PLAN A RETURN TRIP

TAKE ME BACK TO THE TRIP PLANNER.

The eTrip Planner provides an almost instant trip plan with a summary and step-by-step directions that include Metro Stop locations, bus route names and numbers, walking distance, overall trip time and a “Plan A Return Trip” button.

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KCATA NEWS RELEASE / APRIL 13, 2001

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KCATA TO DEDICATE NEW BUS ‘BEAUTY SALON’ APRIL 18

Don't miss the grand opening of the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority's sparkling new beauty salon at 10 a.m., Wednesday, April 18.

Highly trained ATA "stylists" perform dozens, even hundreds of complete makeovers each and every day. In 24 hours, they'll literally go through gallons of shampoo and, if necessary, apply just the right amounts of oil and wax. The tools they use to make their "clients" shine are among the most modern and efficient in the industry. But they also tend to the internal need for the "nutrition" that will provide the energy necessary to get through a busy day.

It's a beauty salon with a very select clientele of—of Metro buses.

All Metro buses pass through the ATA's service line for daily fueling and external and internal cleaning. That service line has been completely remodeled, and the ATA will commemorate the completion of the six-month project April 18 with an 11 a.m. ribbon-tying ceremony at the 1350 E. 17th St. building. The ribbon-tying symbolizes how ATA "Teamwork Ties It All Together" as Maintenance crews worked around the construction schedule to continue detailing buses.

Cleaning equipment, service line doors and concrete floors were all replaced. The new vacuum cleaning system should be much more effective at removing dust particles from the buses' interiors, according to ATA Director of Plant Management Jim Chowning. Furthermore, the ATA has installed a new double-layered tank to handle used oil, which is separated from water used in the Maintenance Department, in an environmentally

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friendly fashion.

New lighting and freshly painted walls have better illuminated the entire Maintenance Department. The paint contains compounds that allow walls to be easily spray-cleaned and, where used on floors, creates a tacky texture that prevents slips.

The April 18 ceremony will also feature a demonstration of the service line in action.

At 2 p.m. that same day, the ATA Board of Commissioners will conduct its regular monthly meeting in the large conference room of the Breen Building at 1200 E. 18th St.

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KCATA

NEWS RELEASE / APRIL 10, 2003

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April 10, 2003

KCATA FACILITY SERVES VITAL ROLE IN REVITALIZING URBAN CORE

Among the plaques, certificates and photos mounted on the walls in Jim Pritchett's office at the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (ATA), the preschool artwork—a simple child's drawing of four buses—might seem out of place. But the ATA Project Management director prizes the magic marker picture. It was framed and presented to him on behalf of all the children who will attend a new child care center that the ATA has built to help pump life back into the heart of Kansas City's urban core.

Pritchett gladly accepted the drawing as the ATA celebrated the opening last fall of its new 39th and Troost MetroCenter, a two-in-one facility that houses both a transit center and a 15,000-square foot day care. The Metro Early Center can accommodate 100 children, ranging from six weeks to five years old.

The \$4 million MetroCenter fills the void of what was for years a bleak vacant lot, at an intersection where two heavily traveled ATA bus routes converge. Combined, The Metro #25—Troost and #39—39th Street account for more than 20 percent of the Kansas City bus system's daily ridership.

"We had no model to follow when we started this project," said Pritchett. "We learned as each step was taken."

The first step, the decision to construct a transit center, was made in 1998, within months after the City of Kansas City, Mo., released its FOCUS KC plan. That urban renewal plan stressed the need to redevelop major corridors, such as Troost Avenue.

"The ATA was asked what we could do to help," recalled Pritchett. "With more than 10,000 people riding the Troost or 39th Street buses each day, a transit center seemed logical.

"But we saw an opportunity to do something more dramatic."

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FOCUS KC emphasized developing better access to quality child care.

“We met with various neighborhood associations, and a child care center in the transit center seemed a natural choice,” Pritchett said.

“Transit and child care are a perfect fit,” stated Troost Corridor Community Association Executive Director Charles Monroe. “There is a lot of bus traffic in that area of Kansas City, and there is a need for more child care. This facility doesn’t just change the problem; it creates solutions.”

The ATA formed a partnership with Greater Kansas City’s largest non-profit child care provider, KCMC Child Development Corporation, to operate the Metro Early Learning Center, which features eight classrooms and a playground. Within six months after opening its doors, the center was already serving 72 children; within another few months, KCMC Site Manager Judy Hall expects there to be a long waiting list of perspective clients.

“KCMC is helping some of The Metro’s youngest customers literally get a ‘Head Start,’” said ATA General Manager Mark Huffer, citing the popular preschool program.

KCMC offers comprehensive care that includes education, social skills, nutrition, health and parental involvement. The Metro Early Learning Center places an emphasis not just on child development, but family development. The center’s family advocate, Patty Lucas, consults parents to establish goals and meet the needs of the whole family.

“Obviously, we’re proud that our agency could play a part in addressing the need for these services in this neighborhood,” stated Huffer.

Security measures at the MetroCenter include digital cameras and patrols by private security guards and Kansas City police officers. Access between the transit center and Early Learning Center is restricted to one-way, from child center’s side of the facility.

KCMC Executive Director Dwayne Crompton praised the ATA for taking a lead role in addressing “the child care problem.”

When Crompton tells colleagues from other cities about the brand new 39th and Troost MetroCenter, they all tend to have the same stunned response: “The public *transit* agency is taking a lead role in providing child care?”

Crompton will pause, before answering affirmatively, “The transit agency where I come from is.”

Although Huffer credits Pritchett for overseeing the project, Pritchett quickly notes that the “long journey” from the project’s conception to its completion “was made smooth through the exceptional” cooperation of local and federal government officials, as well as numerous neighborhood groups and private foundations.

“Cooperation made the MetroCenter possible,” he said.

As she assessed the completed structure and delighted in the smile of the KCMC preschoolers, Kansas City, Mo., Director of City Planning and Development Vicki Noteis observed, “This center takes a page right out of FOCUS KC and brings it to life.”

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KCATA

NEWS RELEASE / JAN. 25, 2002

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ATA EMPLOYEES ‘QUALIFY’ FOR OLYMPIC GAMES

A Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (ATA) employee has qualified for the Olympic Games. No, he is most definitely not a medal contender, but Dennis Nevels is still Salt Lake City-bound, due to his proven mettle as a bus mechanic.

Nevels’ “event” at the Winter Olympiad won’t receive any fanfare, yet it will be vital to helping several thousand fans reach the various Salt Lake venues. He and dozens of other mechanics from throughout the country will converge on Utah next month to help keep the massive Olympic public transportation operation running smoothly.

“It’s an around-the-clock operation, three shifts, working non-stop,” said Nevels, the ATA’s evening maintenance supervisor. “They bring buses in from all over the country to handle all the riders, and they bring mechanics in from all over the country to keep the buses running.”

Another ATA mechanic, Brad Dunaway, will also be working the Olympics. His local Army National Guard unit, the 110th Engineering Battalion, was activated to assist with security. He recently moved to Kansas City from the St. Louis area, joining the ATA maintenance staff three months ago.

“The day I reported to my new Guard unit in November, it wasn’t five minutes until they told me, ‘You’re going to the Olympics,’” said Dunaway on Tuesday, less than 24 hours before reporting for duty. “We’ll be doing car searches, people searches and pulling patrols.”

Nevels has already been subjected to the intense security scrutiny. While in San Francisco representing the ATA at another international competition – the 2000 International Rodeo, an annual skills competition

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among public transit mechanics and bus operators – he responded to Salt Lake’s call for additional mechanics to lend a helping hand during the Olympics.

“I thought it was a once in a lifetime chance, so I signed up,” Nevels said. “Obviously, I’m never going to make it to the Olympics on my athletic prowess.”

His Olympic trial came in the form of an extensive background check. He received numerous phone calls from federal officials, “asking all sorts of questions.” As for Nevels’ qualifications as a mechanic, they were probably never in doubt; he is a four-time qualifier for the International Roadeo.

“This isn’t going to be a vacation,” Nevels stressed. “It’s going to be a lot of hard work.”

But, upon arriving in Utah, he does plan to meet with Dunaway and determine which events they’d like to attend when neither is working. Not surprisingly, the two mechanics agreed that if they could select just one event, they’d like to see the bobsled because, in Nevels’ words, “it’s partly mechanical.”

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