



St. Joseph Area Stakeholder Questionnaire Summary of Responses to Date January 27, 2009

Participant Information¹

- Brad Lau, Executive Director, St. Joseph Regional Port Authority
- Delphia Shanks, Director of Community Development, Community Action Partnership
- Gary Shermerhorn, President, St. Joseph Area Bicycle Club
- JC Dollar, CEO, MERIL
- Jerry Schwichtenberg, RSVP Program Director, Interserv
- Lynn Wells, Executive Director, Progressive Community Services
- Marci Bennett, Executive Director, St. Joseph Area CVB
- Nasser Memarian, Dir. of Risk Management, Energy and Transportation, St. Joseph Schools
- Pat Rich, Employment Coordinator, United Cerebral Palsy of Northwest Missouri
- Robin Hammond, Executive Director, St. Joseph Youth Alliance
- Yvonne Wright, Supervisor, Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

1. *Describe the importance of transportation for your organization (or the people that you represent).*
 - CAPSTJOE represents low-income families in the four counties of Andrew, Buchanan, Clinton and DeKalb. Most of these families are working, and a number of those who are not are either elderly or disabled. Reliable transportation is a huge issue for our families—they have difficulty maintaining a car because of the cost, but public transportation doesn't run frequently or flexibly enough to make it useful for families who must make multiple stops (ie, dropping child at daycare on way to work), but the distance between work and home in St Joseph is not usually a walkable distance. In addition, walking is not a viable option because sidewalks are not in place to walk safely to (often) low-wage jobs from low-cost housing options.
 - Destination is a drivable and accessible center of the US. CVB promotes accessibility and location: 35 miles from KCI airport. Very important to CVB and economy.
 - Employment services for clients to and from work. Primary use of city bus system
 - Families rely on transportation – barriers constantly come up. Ride to work, school are big concerns for families in need. Agency does not provide transportation but relies on it.

¹ Responses are not in order by participant and are sometimes edited for clarity or brevity.

- From an economic development perspective, the 169/I-29 interchange and the roadway running from 169 east to Riverside Road / AC extension, the Stockyards industrial park (congestion), Lower Leg Road (employers) in need of repair.
 - Infrastructure is important to the mission of the organization. Smooth roads with wide shoulders are very important to cyclists. Well-marked
 - Mobilizes senior volunteers using van, picking up and delivering to worksite. This is the only way for volunteers to get to the work site. Also pick up people for congregate meals. Also deliver people to doctor's appointments but has had to stop all medical services except volunteers due to rising prices.
 - People being served do not drive at all so public transit is primary source of travel
 - Transportation is the focus of our organization. During regular school terms we operate more than 4000 miles daily for St. Joseph School District and our other customers within the stated geographic area.
 - Very important – working with consumers who don't have reliable transportation – servicing persons with disabilities to find employment
 - Vital – serve people in 9-county area, mostly rural.
2. *Describe any unusual or unique travel patterns, needs or challenges faced by your organization (or the people you represent).*
- Accessibility to buses, ADA curbs, length of routing, frequency of stops
 - Bus routes are not supportive of trip-chaining (home to child care to work, etc). How do you meet the needs?
 - Clients are scheduled to work weekends. Services aren't provided, buses run more infrequently, inconveniences workers. Holidays are bad as well – need to find other means of transportation
 - Consumers – over 800 – served on daily basis. Over 20,000 individuals traveling to and from medical appointments. Employment, grocery shopping, also important
 - If you look at concentrated areas of low-wage work in St Joseph—along the Belt or at the Industrial Park—they are not accessible via foot safely. Looking at childcares that accept subsidized childcare payments, they are not necessarily located on routes that provide a family the ability to (in less than 2 hours) drop a child off at daycare before work, or pick them up.
 - Peak hour congestion at the I-29/169 interchange (Eastside industrial park, East Town business park) is always critical, at the 36 Highway / Riverside road (mainly during shift changes), Metrowoods, Alltech, Stockyards industrial parks, rail crossings (Alabama, 759 highway) – new access through development of an overpass will help with safety during train crossings. Funding expected within 2-3 years.
 - Persons with disabilities cannot always wait at bus stops. Door-to-door service has been very successful. Accessible buses, lift or low-floor
 - Shoulders, markings, just a little additional space. Not special, per se, just regular maintenance and allowance given to autos.

- Signage along interstate – sights and attractions in particular are needed. MoDOT standards are 100,000 people per year for signage – change standards at state level. Billboards are not preferred and are more expensive. Regionally and within the City. #2 biggest concern among visitors in 2007 visitor profile study.
- State program curtailment has caused cutbacks in service patterns. Interserv has stepped in to provide for some of the lack in services. Doctor visits have increased dramatically.
- Travel patterns are not limited to major roadways, but extend into smaller residential areas and operate during all weather seasons, 5-days/week.

Transportation Related Questions

3. *What is the biggest transportation related concern/problem for your organization or the people you represent?*

- Availability of bus service for different shifts/times, frequency
- Cost involved in transportation for the families being served by the agency – it is expensive to travel. We can no longer take auto travel for granted with the economy and fuel as it is priced.
- Everyone needs to obey traffic laws – give everyone a fair chance. Rumble strips impair bike travel. Shorter rumble strips still give enough shoulder for cyclists.
- I would say that it is the necessity for a car in order to live life in any semblance of an efficient fashion—if you rely on public transportation or your feet, it takes hours to get anywhere, maybe even an entire day.
- Lack of transportation for some consumers – can't depend on others, considerable physical limitations. Learning how to live independently severely limits capabilities.
- Scheduling of city bus system – frequency is biggest issue
- Signage – around town to museums and attractions. Riverfront Park signs point to abandoned park. These need to come down. Hwy 59 from south is very confusing through industrial area – people get lost trying to get through south end.
- State program curtailment has caused cutbacks in service patterns. Interserv has stepped in to provide for some of the lack in services. Doctor visits have increased dramatically.
- The 169 / I-29 interchange and surrounding general area, looking east with particular concern for truck travel. There is also a lot of concern for failing infrastructure in general.
- Travel patterns are not limited to major roadways, but extend into smaller residential areas and operate during all weather seasons, 5-days/week.
- Travel time for the bus system is a big big problem.

4. *In general, what existing transportation issues should be addressed?*

- ADA issues between vehicle to home. Paratransit services needs to be improved – door to door.
- Bus frequency, amount of time it takes to travel from point A to B. Making sure buses are always running (mentioned dinner break for drivers as downtime)
- Bus routing and service frequency is a system-wide problem. There is no public transportation serving certain areas like Trevillion Drive off Belt Highway. HUD would not approve a property purchase here because no bus service existed.
- Continuation of services, door-to-door availability, increasing frequency of services
- Create a system that is efficient and affordable
- Failing infrastructure in general, improving congestion issues at major interchanges, lack of rail served sites, and rail congestion in general will be more and more of an issue with the national energy crisis
- I think awareness is a major issue: people don't realize what it's like to ride the buses. They're actually really nice and comfortable and I think they have a bad image. Having said that, I also think having people ride the bus for one week would give them new insights into how important a good transportation system is. I think safe walking/biking routes are crucial to our clients. They will use them.
- Paved shoulders should be maintained and cleaned.
- Residential growth should be planned with sufficient connecting roadways.
- State program curtailment has caused cutbacks in service patterns. Interserv has stepped in to provide for some of the lack in services. Doctor visits have increased dramatically.

5. *What issues related to regional growth and development should be addressed?*

- Atchison KS partners with St. Joseph on Amelia Earhart commemorative issues – coordination of signage and clear directions would show improvement
- Bridge improvements
- Development in northern St. Joe has not been met by the infrastructure.
- Farm to market road improvements – Iowa as example for paving gravel roads (Ragbriar ride)
- Major interchanges, 36 Hwy running east
- Rural transportation connections are available on a limited basis in rural communities. Services to nine counties
- Services to rural areas are nonexistent. Vans may be more beneficial than larger buses.
- VA vets need to travel to Leavenworth – try to arrange volunteers with private vehicles. Gas increases have limited the numbers of volunteers willing to serve. Also service to Kansas City and KU Medical Center.

6. *What transportation improvements/priorities would you like to see in the St. Joseph Area?*

- A major road connection from the north Belt area to the north St. Joseph Avenue/K-Hwy area.
- Bus frequency improvements, accessible transport in rural communities.
- Driver awareness – education of general public about alternative travel and safety
- Increased bus frequency, service amount, improved holiday schedules, increase service areas.
- Maintenance improvements and improved access to industrial sites around the region.
- Make the system work so well that people can choose to leave their cars in the garage. Bring back rail service to Jefferson City and Kansas City for commuters.
- Medical trips to Kansas City, fixing the bus system to have adequate travel times that make bus trips a realistic option
- On-call door-to-door transportation (private/non-profit/combo) being able to provide enough services to seniors.
- Paratransit system needs to be developed with extended hours, better publicity or marketing. Available only in limited areas within City of St. Joseph
- Walking/biking paths along major commuter roads (Jules, Faraon, Messanie, Mitchell, 22nd Street—Especially along Jules and Faraon from downtown to the Belt). Greater flexibility with the bus system. Night travel is a recent improvement that will really benefit families. Weekend travel is extremely limited and that's a problem for a single mom who needs to take young kids grocery shopping—it takes hours and you have no opportunity to change plans if your child gets tired, sick, or grumpy.
- Waterworks Road needs an outlet on the north. The road has a brand new nature center and softball complex that does not have adequate access. More than one access needs to be developed. It is a public safety issue. Gene Field Road is a mess – no curbs, no streetlights. These improvements are needed for safety before someone gets hurt. Riverside Road from Frederick Road to Cook Road is also in need of repair.

7. *In your opinion, do you think there are certain obstacles that prevent transportation improvements from occurring?*

- Coordination is going well. Taking on the initiative is the hardest part.
- Funding, failing infrastructure – community bonding/referendum is problematic given the current economic realities, but will eventually need to be tested. At the statewide and national level fuel conservation is affecting gas tax revenues – new tools will be necessary to make up for loss of funds. Toll fees on a statewide basis for new and maintenance (I-70 in particular).
- Gas prices, vans rather than buses
- I am not familiar enough to know if this is the norm, but I don't know that we hold developers to high standards in terms of what improvements are put in.

- Money
- Money and focus. Previous plans have not adequately looked at the whole picture, prioritized, and outlined implementation
- Money to develop infrastructure, a responsible agency to take on the burden
- Money, awareness of capabilities and value that people with disabilities can bring to the region. 24% of residents in 9 counties have a disability.
- Money, volunteers
- Money, willingness to undertake the improvements
- Reluctance of area property owners and financing.

Transportation Coordination Questions

8. *Any thoughts on how transportation services could be better coordinated?*

- Community partnership is good – agencies may be willing to come up with options. No current coordination
- Fund a car fleet within the organization. Downtown sheltered workshop – coordinated rides to & from downtown destination. There is also a similar workshop in Cameron MO. Provide matching funds for a van program through MoDOT.
- In some ways, the current system is fabulous—house pick-ups and price. I would love to see an employer program where they reimbursed people for the cost of their bus tickets, or somehow helped subsidize the cost of a monthly pass. It's so much more efficient, but having \$20 at one time is very difficult for families. In addition, employers could provide incentives for their employees to engage in certain behaviors: biking or walking to work, carpooling, etc. Would there be any way to get the taxis and public transport to sync or run through the same call system? Right now the taxis are independent contractors and the city has no control, but they really offer fairly shoddy service and can leave people waiting for hours at a time.
- No current system in place. Discussion has taken place about a “one-stop shop” to help families avoid hopping around between appointments
- Regional focus on transportation. Transportation is a key ingredient to business development. Communication between agencies, both private and public sector.
- Shotgun-based approach is current operating procedure. No existing coordination with other agencies. None in place.
- Transportation services and utility functions should work more closely together.