

City of Lawrence Coordinated Public Transportation Development Plan
Chapter 2
Public Outreach Activities- Phase I

1. Introduction

In a project of this nature, one of the most important outcomes is to achieve a high level of consensus and recognition of benefit from all stakeholders. The public involvement process was designed for this project to provide opportunities not only to involve and engage stakeholders throughout the study, but to gain qualitative insight into the level of interest and potential “buy-in” from stakeholders. This strategic approach offers the opportunity to both “listen” and “inform” simultaneously. This approach also helps to ensure that stakeholder perspectives and viewpoints are not just heard, but are operationally and politically understood and translated into realistic plans and programs.

Working with the Study Management Team, the project team developed a series of activities to ensure that our outreach efforts reached the greatest number of stakeholders possible. A major aspect of this effort was the identification of different types of approaches to reach different stakeholder groups.

The public outreach effort in Phase I included the following activities:

- A public meeting to introduce the project
- Roundtable discussions with major stakeholders
- Meetings with Lawrence Transit System (LTS) bus operators
- A focus group with LTS riders
- Meetings with the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and the regional office of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- Telephone or in-person interviews to supplement these activities

Public meetings provide a forum for the public to offer input and comment on an ongoing project. There is always the possibility that only those with strong opinions on transit would attend a public meeting. Thus, while the project team recognized and valued the importance of the public meeting process, we expanded our activities to include other avenues of participation.

The first of these avenues involved roundtable discussions with major stakeholders, including:

- The LTS service contractor (MV Transportation);
- The Transpo Board, the student governing body overseeing KU on Wheels (KUOW);
- The KUOW service contractor (Lawrence Bus Company or LBC);
- City officials;
- University officials.

The Phase I roundtables were intended to gather information and perceptions, share information about the study and transit in general, and obtain buy-in from major stakeholders by bringing them into the process.. Another series of roundtables was planned later in the project, to discuss the draft final report.

Operator interviews are an excellent strategy to obtain information and buy-in from LTS and KUOW employees who interact with the public every day. Bus operators are an invaluable source of input on the day-to-day operation of the transit system. The project team met with LTS operators at the MV garage on June 14, but never had the opportunity to meet with KUOW operators.

Focus groups with existing riders are a very practical method of obtaining input in small group settings. The smaller group size and specially designed discussion topics allow for focused, unbiased conversation. The project team conducted a focus group with LTS riders in July. Poor attendance precluded conduct of a focus group with KUOW riders in September.

Meetings with KDOT in Topeka and the FTA Region VII Office in Kansas City were added to the list of outreach activities. The primary purpose of these meetings was to explore funding options, particularly for capital purchases, although they also served to brief FTA and KDOT officials on our activities and to gain insight into their perspectives. An interview with Keith Yehle of the University of Kansas was also intended to discuss funding options. Aaron Quisenberry, the faculty advisor for KUOW, was also interviewed.

On-board surveys were conducted in September for both LTS and KUOW routes. These are summarized in other sections of this report.

Collectively, these strategies and techniques have provided us with a comprehensive profile of stakeholder, rider, and general public opinions and perspectives relative to the study objectives, and will be used to develop and fine-tune alternatives and recommendations.

2. Public Meeting I

The first public meeting for this study was held at City Hall on June 12, 2006 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Approximately 22 members of the public were in attendance. The meeting was advertised on LTS and KUOW buses and through a public notice in the Lawrence Journal-World. A mix of LTS and KUOW riders attended, along with some non-users.

Dan Boyle began the meeting by welcoming participants and explaining the goals of this study and of this public meeting. After this introduction, members of the public spoke of their concerns, critiques, and compliments related to public transportation in Lawrence. Issues with LTS service in the City were typical of those faced by a start-up system: infrequent service; lack of evening service; inadequate connections. The primary problem with KUOW is the age and condition of the buses (see Figure 1). Some speakers compared transit in Lawrence unfavorably with transit in various European cities. The difficulty of parking on campus was noted as encouraging a market for transit. The public suggested the need for greater availability of route and schedule information at bus stops, for transfers between the two systems, and for a single pass good on both systems. Speakers supported the idea of an integrated transit system serving both the City and the University.

When asked to cite good elements of the current service, speakers mentioned frequency of service, ample buses, and recognizable buses for KUOW service. The best elements of LTS service included the transfer system and the crosstown route (Route 5). Riders noted that they feel safe on the buses and at bus stops.



Figure 29 At the public meeting, attendees expressed concern over the age and condition of the KUOW fleet. Some of the buses do not present an environmentally attractive appearance.

Later service in the evening was the most requested improvement at the public hearing, with better north-south service west of campus a distant second. Improved frequency, new buses, Sunday service, improved signage, and integrated service with shared passes for T and KUOW riders were each mentioned by one speaker.

3. Roundtables

As noted earlier, the purposes of the roundtables in this phase of the study were to gather information and perceptions, share information about the study and transit in general, and obtain buy-in from major stakeholders by bringing them into the process. A total of six roundtables were held in June and July. Summaries of individual roundtables are provided in this section.

City of Lawrence Roundtable

The project team met with the City Manager, the Mayor, the vice Mayor, and directors of various city departments on June 12 in the City Manager's Conference Room at City Hall. The City views a history of cooperation with the University on issues such as land use, storm water runoff, and a new fire station as positive steps in developing a strong professional "town-gown" relationship. Roundtable participants are favorably disposed toward greater coordination

between LTS and KUOW, and see a phased approach as the best way to proceed. The City is pleased with the continuing ridership growth on LTS buses, and its one concern is to hold current riders and funds harmless in any future coordination.

University of Kansas Roundtable

The project team met with approximately 15 KU students, faculty, and staff on June 13 at Alderson Auditorium in the Student Union. Roundtable participants were very clear in expressing an immediate need for new buses on campus. One participant noted that KUOW works well for students, but not for others, and that LTS and KUOW need to cooperate more closely in addressing the non-student demand for travel to and from campus. Service needs to be more convenient on both sides. As examples, LTS Route 8 arrives on campus a few minutes after 8:00 a.m., affecting its usefulness for staff whose jobs begin at 8:00, while KUOW has cut back service to outlying areas and does not operate during breaks.

Roundtable participants reported a variety of priorities, including accessible buses on KUOW, schedules that are easier to read, clearer route terminology (Route 6 clockwise and counterclockwise should be changed), direct service to the student health center on campus, shared LTS-KUOW passes, and greater use of shuttles for special events in conjunction with moving all special event parking off campus.

University of Kansas Vice Provosts Roundtable

Originally only one roundtable was envisioned for the university, but given the importance of the Vice Provosts in the Task Force process, a separate roundtable was scheduled for this group. The project team met with the Vice Provosts on June 13 at the Provost's Conference Room in Strong Hall. This roundtable was different in tone, with serious concerns raised about potential consolidation of transit services. Several participants held public transportation in general in low regard, and viewed LTS as an underutilized and oversold system. One service option is for KUOW to operate shuttles on campus, with LTS taking over the responsibility for all off-campus service. Some noted that KUOW's key role is to get students to class on time, and this will continue to be an absolute requirement regardless of how future transit services are structured.

Participants strongly supported the need for student involvement in transit governance, at least as it relates to on-campus services. A major student fear is that a consolidated system could collapse without an effective governance structure. One participant reminded the group that KU employees need to get to work, and transit could play a bigger role in the work commute. The ability to tap into new capital money is a major impetus for increased cooperation, without which most participants would be much less interested in working with the City on transit.

Both the City and KU have been seen as speaking with more than one voice, and this group firmly noted that the only voices that the City needs to hear are those of the Provost and Chancellor. At the end of the meeting, it was noted that the University has not had an extensive history of cooperation with the City, and is "learning the dance" anew in each instance. The most important message for the study team from this meeting is the need to enact safeguards that address the Vice Provosts' legitimate concerns as the team develops service and governance options.

MV Transportation Roundtable

The project team met with the General Manager and supervisors of MV Transportation, the contractor for LTS, on June 14 at MV's offices. This roundtable focused more on potential changes to the LTS route network. LTS brought several ideas for route changes to a public hearing in 2004, but none was implemented. Roundtable participants saw a need to connect the west side of Lawrence with KU and to provide north-south service west of Iowa. Amenities, including stop signs, shelters, potentially a transit center, and rest room locations for operators, also a concern.

Participants expressed some wariness with regard to consolidation with KUOW. Challenges include a physical facility to accommodate a much larger bus fleet, personnel, and expectations (the latter in regard to requirements for indoor parking for buses and alternate fuels in previous KUOW requests for proposals). Participants supported a coordinated effort in which KUOW operates shuttles on campus and LTS connects to KUOW at the new park-and-ride, the stadium, and Naismith.

Among the proposals for changes to the LTS system:

- Split Route 6 into two routes. Route 6 would continue to serve 6th Street; a new Route 9 might travel south to connect with the campus.
- Remove the Wal-Mart loop from Route 7 and increase frequency on the route.
- Add a bus to Route 8 to operate every 40 minutes.
- There have been requests to reroute Route 5 to serve the prison south of K-10 on Franklin, but this route's running time is already tight. Should the route be split, possibly at 31st & Iowa or at the KU Park & Ride lot?
- Operate smaller buses on Routes 1 and 4.

Lawrence Bus Company Roundtable

The project team met with the General Manager and supervisors of Lawrence Bus Company, the contractor for KUOW, and the director and the faculty advisor of the Transpo Board on June 20 at the Student Senate Conference Room. Roundtable participants emphasized that KUOW is a different type of transit service, requiring a much more personal touch. Everything KUOW does is based on student needs, and schedules are predicated on class times.

Participants were very wary about consolidation with LTS, with concerns that (a) LTS does not understand and would not be able to accommodate student needs, (b) SafeRide would be left aside in the consolidation process (LBC operates SafeRide at cost now, and the service would be much more expensive to provide were it not tied in with the rest of KUOW service), and (c) LBC would be put out of business. Participants felt that the Task Force process moved very quickly from a discussion of park-and-ride to issues of consolidation of services, and as a result did not fully trust this study process.

Personalized elements of service were emphasized for all KUOW services, but particularly for SafeRide. Participants noted a difference in culture between KUOW and LTS, and also questioned what role students would have if changes were made. Immediate concerns included transit capacity for service at the new park-and-ride lot and the effects on peak bus requirements of converting to an unlimited access type of system.

KUOW Roundtable

While the director and faculty advisor of the Transpo Board governing KUOW attended the LBC roundtable, the importance of the students' role led to a separate KUOW roundtable. The project team met with members of the Transpo Board on the evening of June 20. This roundtable was held off campus because the Kansas Union closes early during the summer months. Roundtable participants were very thoughtful and reasonable regarding what came out of the KU Task Force process and how to move forward now. Control of decisions regarding transit service on or to/from campus is an obvious concern, but this is motivated by a strong belief on the part of all participants that student management is preferable to any alternative. The priorities for the students are: new buses; free fares (an unlimited access approach); environmental impacts.

The relationship between the students and KU has been strained by the perception that the University administration does not listen to the students and by uncertainty over how the move of KUOW to Parking & Transit affects its autonomy. Roundtable participants noted that the Ames/Iowa State University structure is often held up as a model, but the financial contribution of Iowa State is never mentioned as applicable to KU. Other concerns focused on the bus fleet, particularly the age and accessibility of buses, fuel type, particulate emission, and lack of air conditioning and working radios. The fate of the SafeRide if KUOW were to go away was also mentioned as a concern.

Participants would like to move toward an unlimited access type of system where all students could ride for free without having to purchase a bus pass, and believe that an increased fee to support this service could be passed in a student referendum or by the Student Senate. Some would like to see a fee increase cover the cost of a bus replacement program as well as day-to-day operation.

The KUOW focus group participants still believe that this process could lead to a win-win situation for all concerned. The students expressed a strong desire to be a part of any proposed solution.

Since Aaron Quisenberry, faculty advisor for KUOW, could not attend the KUOW roundtable, the project team met with him the next day (June 21) at his office. Aaron noted the dedication of students who have run KUOW over the years. He empathizes with the students while also recognizing the benefits of an outside funding source for new buses. Over the course of the past year, Aaron had encouraged the students to prioritize needed improvements. The priorities for the students are: new buses; free fares (an unlimited access approach); environmental impacts. The basic issue is: students want new buses, but also do not want to cede control of a system that they have operated for a long time. Aaron noted that students who now purchase a bus pass would see their cost reduced, even with a fee increase under an unlimited access system, and could form a voting block big enough to pass a student referendum for a fee increase. The broader question is whether this is a good use of student fees, given alternatives that exist.

4. Operator Meetings

Bus operators are the front line of any transit agency because they deal with riders and routes every day of the week. The project team proposed meetings with LTS and KUOW bus operators as part of the public outreach process.

LTS Operator Meeting

The project team met with LTS operators on June 14 at the offices of MV, the contractor for LTS service. The team set up at a table in the break room between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and spoke with operators as they prepared to go out on the afternoon shift and returned after the morning shift.

LTS operators agreed that a top priority was to provide more frequent service on Route 8, the only LTS route that serves the KU campus. This route has a headway of 80 minutes, and operators suggested a 40-minute headway. Operators also noted the need for additional north-south service west of campus. Kasold was the consensus choice for a north-south route in that area.

Given the chance, bus operators always comment on a general lack of sufficient running time in the schedules. When this topic arose, the project team pressed them to identify specific instances of tight running times. The group consensus was that Route 5 and Route 6 (particularly in the afternoon) needed additional running time. A suggestion was made to split Route 6 into two routes. Operators also suggested potential reroutings on Routes 3 and 8 and in the general vicinity of 31st & Iowa.

Surprisingly, operators did not mention the lack of restroom facilities, but did point out the need for additional stop signs and shelters. They support the move toward designated bus stops only, i.e., not stopping whenever someone flags them down. They also thought that a fare increase would make sense, but feel that there are too many fare media at present. There was no consensus regarding evening service, but operators did not think that Sunday service was needed. The most common complaints from passengers are frequency of bus service and delays and/or reroutes caused by summer construction.

LTS operators had serious concerns about a consolidated system. They cited differences in culture between LTS and KUOW operators in terms of professionalism, training, and willingness to go out of their way to help riders. A simple first step would be to coordinate transfers with KUOW routes and provide a pass good on both systems, followed by new or changed routes addressing gaps in service. LTS operators saw a need for bigger buses on existing and proposed routes serving the KU campus.

KUOW Operator Meeting

The project team had hoped to meet with KUOW operators in September 2006. Approval for this meeting was never granted.

5. Focus Groups with Riders

The intent of a focus group is to obtain participants' perceptions of transit based on their use. They do not represent anyone other than themselves. A focus group does not produce statistically significant results, but its open-ended nature allows for discussions that go beyond the limits of a questionnaire to elicit interesting and sometimes surprising findings. The focus group with KUOW riders was scheduled in September but poor attendance precluded conduct of this focus group. The LTS focus group is summarized below.

LTS Focus Group

The project team convened a focus group consisting of five LTS riders (past and present) on July 10 at the Community Building in downtown Lawrence. LTS posted placards advertising the focus group and inviting interested persons to call and place their names on the list of participants. The focus group began at 5:00 p.m. and concluded at 6:30 p.m. Snacks and refreshments were provided.

Participants covered a wide variety of topics concerning LTS service. Major concerns were infrequent service and a too short span of service. Better route and schedule information for riders (preferably in real time) and added crosstown service west of campus were also requested. Evening service was ranked as more important than Sunday service, although participants would like both, and a need for earlier service was cited. An ideal service day would extend from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. (one participant felt that buses should run until 11:20 p.m. to allow second and third-shift workers to ride).

An interesting comment noted that City Hall offers discounted parking for its employees, why not a discounted transit pass? Some type of employer pass program could encourage ridership. Additional pass outlets are needed, particularly for those who purchase a disability pass.

There was a difference of opinion with regard to the stop policy. Some felt that the flag stop policy led to delays and an unnecessarily long trip (“we stop all the time”), while others who have disabilities or are pregnant supported flag stops. If more stops were added at key locations, it might be possible to do away with flag stops.

Two participants used to ride much more often than they do now. One stopped riding after he got a car, the other noted that the transit options are too limiting for his needs (primarily low frequency – he was a former rider on Route 8). Route suggestions included a “straight shot” across 23rd Street (not deviating down to 31st & Iowa) and some type of north-south service west of campus, on Kasold or Wakarusa. A stop at the jail was also supported by participants.

The focus group revealed some positive aspects of transit service valued by the riders. All participants praised LTS operators for their courtesy, tolerance, patience, and driving skills. The coverage provided by LTS means that a rider can get to anyplace in the City. Transfers are perceived as convenient, and the fact that operators call ahead when a transferring passenger is on board to ensure that the other bus waits for the transfer. Participants also noted the cleanliness of the buses. One woman noted the “hometown feel” on LTS buses: operators know the names of regular riders, look for them at their stops, and care about their elderly riders. She has been on other transit systems and has not seen this level of interaction. Overall, there is a strong feeling that LTS is “my system.” This sense of ownership is perhaps the most positive aspect of the system.

6. Other Meetings and Interviews

In an effort to ensure a clear understanding of funding options and procedures, the project team scheduled meetings with Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and the Region VII office of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The project team also conducted a telephone interview with Keith Yehle of the University of Kansas. Mr. Yehle, who participated in the Vice Provosts roundtable, has extensive experience in the legislative arena, particularly with regard to funding.

KDOT Meeting

The project team met with John Rosacker, Assistant Bureau Chief of Transportation with KDOT, on June 18 at KDOT offices in Topeka. KDOT used Section 5309 funds that were about to lapse to make a one-time allocation of \$1 million, used to purchase buses for the new park-and-ride shuttle service on the KU campus. This allocation was clearly intended to encourage coordination between the City and the University, and KDOT supports this study as a continuation of previous efforts.

The City of Lawrence is a direct recipient of FTA funds. KDOT's State Comprehensive Transportation (SCT) Program provides \$6 million each year to transit systems that can use it for any purpose. The urban systems, which receive 59 percent of these funds, agreed to an allocation formula based on population, which results in approximately \$250,000 per year for Lawrence. The urban systems are considering possible changes to the allocation formula. One alternative would base allocation on both population and ridership. If KUOW ridership were to be counted with LTS ridership, Lawrence would receive a much greater share of the SCT funds under this alternative.

KDOT is supportive of express bus service between Johnson County and Lawrence. This could be relevant to the study, since KU has a campus in Johnson County. The KUOW survey included questions about commuting between Johnson and Douglas Counties.

There is a State statute governing transit authorities, but its definitions limit it to Topeka only. KDOT sees an authority as one possibility for Lawrence through revision of existing statutes or new legislation, and could envision other applications in the State, e.g., allowing rural counties to band together to provide coordinated service.

KDOT does not expect to have additional funds available for the City and the University. There is little support for converting highway funds to transit.

As a follow-up to this meeting and to the Vice Provosts roundtable, the project team conducted a telephone interview with Keith Yehle of KU. Keith noted that the amount of money needed by both systems is far in excess of what can be expected through earmarks. The interview did not identify any promising near-term funding options, but there was a good discussion of various long-term options. Keith reiterated the Vice Provosts' concern that the students be included in any solution as a mark of respect for what they have accomplished with KUOW.

FTA Meeting

The project team met with the FTA Region VII Administrator, Mohktee Ahmad, and several of his staff members on July 10 at the FTA Regional Office in Kansas City, MO. As with the KDOT meeting, funding was a major topic of conversation. FTA expects little changes in its funding over the next several years. Highway dollars through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) programs can be used for transit purposes, but because of the level of highway needs, this tends to happen only if funds are about to lapse and there is a local transit match. The funding discussions, as expected, did not identify a readily available pot of money for capital needs. FTA did note that a National Transit Database (NTD) report that included the combined ridership of LTS and KUOW would increase formula funding. There is a difference of opinion within FTA as to whether LTS could report KUOW ridership now.

One possibility raised by FTA was the Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) program. There are six criteria related to performance categories that determine funding under this program. Lawrence currently qualifies in one category. FTA estimates indicate that an integrated transit system (LTS plus KUOW) would qualify under three categories, resulting in an increase of approximately \$260,000 in the apportionment for Lawrence. Inclusion of park & ride ridership could potentially increase this amount (FTA conducted this estimate for the project team prior to the opening of the park & ride lot). In comparison, FTA notes that Ames, IA qualified under five of the six STIC performance categories in FY 2006.

FTA is supportive of the concept of one unified transit system in Lawrence. It also supports a broader systems planning approach that ties transit capital needs with other programs at the University and in the City. The capital needs for fleet replacement and a new maintenance facility are far beyond the typical level of earmarks received by transit systems in Kansas, but a combined University-City initiative could provide a vehicle to get the attention of Congressional leaders.

7. Study Management Team Meetings

The Study Management Team (SMT) for this project met three times during Phase I: June 12 in the Pine Room of the Kansas Union; June 22 in the Curry Room of the Kansas Union; July 12 in the City Manager's Conference Room at City Hall.

Most SMT members have been involved in the KU Task Force that led to this study, and are very eager to see the process move forward. There are no preconceived notions about the ultimate outcome. The SMT is genuinely curious to see where the process will lead.

The SMT's list of unmet needs coincided with those mentioned by other stakeholders. Increased frequency, later service, improved north-south connections west of campus, and ability to serve new student apartment complexes farther from campus were all mentioned.

Members noted that the Task Force process revealed many fears about potential changes. It is crucial for this study to identify and address these fears. One KU goal is not to build more parking, and transit is an important means to achieve this goal. This study needs to identify alternatives that address the needs of the City and KU and leave room to grow in the future. Concrete recommendations are needed along with a clear description of the process by which these recommendations were developed.

KU students are a very important part of this process. The students who operate KUOW fear a loss of control of the campus transit system under consolidation. Identifying solutions that address those fears will be a challenge for this study.

The current student fee level is \$16 per semester for KUOW and \$6 per semester for SafeRide. Each dollar of the fee generates between \$47,000 and \$50,000 annually.

Funding is a sensitive issue between the University and the City. It is important for this study to identify funding sources. The buses to operate the new campus park-and-ride shuttle service were purchased by the City through a \$1 million grant from KDOT, but issues arose in the process. Trust needs to be established wherever funding is concerned.

SMT members supported a more extensive peer review process to identify in detail potential models for city-university cooperation. The SMT also suggested the need to involve Haskell

Indian Nations University (HINU). The project team agreed with these ideas. If the peer review identifies particularly relevant examples, it might be possible to schedule one or two trips for on-site discussions with other universities and transit agencies. The peer review was extended to include additional peers; peer results are presented in Chapter 3. The project team contacted Lori Tapahonso, Public Information Officer at HINU, emailed information about the scope of this study, and offered to meet with her and other HINU representatives during its site visit in September. Ms. Tapahonso did not respond to this offer, but she did have the opportunity to discuss the project with Cliff Galante in the course of another meeting.

Identification of alternatives through this study is critical to generating further discussion at the University and the City. The time frame is tight, and the study needs to remain on track. One key is to keep all stakeholders and decision-makers informed at every stage.

The University is more likely to support the recommendations emerging from this study if three conditions are met:

- Student support;
- Assurance that the University's needs are being met; and
- Reasonable financial implications.

8. Summary of Public Outreach Activities, Phase I

This study's public outreach effort targeted key stakeholder groups, including:

- Transit riders
- City representatives
- University representatives
- University students
- Lawrence Transit System and KU on Wheels staff and contract providers

Phase I was intended to obtain input from these stakeholder groups as well as from members of the general public. Along with public meetings, other activities including roundtables, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and meetings with specific groups were conducted to ensure broad opportunities for input from diverse sources.

Members of the public and riders expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of the system that are typically problematic for relatively new transit systems: lack of evening service, infrequent headways, and inadequate connections between systems. Public meeting attendees voiced support for integration of the two systems, especially for a pass good on both the T and KUOW. The condition of the KUOW bus fleet was a particular concern of students and KU employees. Employees also noted that the KUOW network is designed for students, not employees. Results of the on-board surveys are presented in detail elsewhere, but it is worth noting here that riders are very pleased with most elements of transit service and give both the T and KUOW high overall ratings. Sunday service on the T and service when campus is not in session on KUOW were among the most frequently requested improvements.

City representatives cited several positive precedents for cooperation with KU and supported the idea of increased coordination. Their main concern was to hold existing T riders and funding harmless in the process of integrating the two systems. The City favored a phased approach to integration, and noted the professional relationship between the City and KU.

University representatives expressed concerns over governance and funding issues. The Vice Provosts did not want to see student fees support the City's transit system. The ability to tap into new capital money for buses on campus would be a major benefit of increased cooperation. University representatives strongly supported student involvement in transit governance under any type of integrated system. Like the City, the University has legitimate concerns regarding its interests and how these would be heard and addressed in an integrated system.

University students expressed three priorities: new buses; an unlimited access program funded through student fees and not requiring the separate purchase of a semester or annual pass; an environmentally friendly bus fleet. Students are justifiably proud of managing the KUOW service and are concerned over their role in an integrated system, especially with regard to decisions over how student fees are spent. Students are also concerned over the fate of SafeRide under any type of consolidation.

Transit staff from the T, KU on Wheels, and their contractors cited frequency, on-time performance, and crosstown service as priorities. Evening and crosstown service and transit amenities were also important. Supervisors from both contractors noted a difference in culture between KUOW and LTS which could affect any integration proposal.

Phase I of the public outreach for this project revealed both considerable interest in the idea of integrating or consolidating LTS and KUOW and significant concerns over the impacts of such a move on each of the involved parties. The challenges for this study are to clarify the benefits of integration and to address legitimate concerns regarding potential negative impacts. The remaining chapters in this report document how the project team, with the help of the Study Management Team overseeing this study, has addressed these challenges.

This chapter has described Phase I of the public outreach activities. The project team subsequently conducted public and stakeholder meetings to present findings and alternatives and made revisions and developed recommendations in response to public and stakeholder input. This process is described as part of the remaining chapters. The project team shared what we heard from each group with all stakeholders to build confidence in the transparency of the public outreach process. This transparency also helped each group of stakeholders understand the reasoning behind the development and evaluation of alternatives.

These subsequent meetings were critical to the success of this study because the project team was able to respond to specific concerns of each stakeholder group and thus to clarify that the concerns were heard, were taken seriously, and affected the evaluation of alternatives and the final recommendations. The input in Phase I was very important, but the responsiveness to each stakeholder group and the willingness to make additional revisions played a critical role in the development of a plan that reflects all stakeholders.