

TO: Public Transit Advisory Committee
FROM: Transfer Station Committee
DATE: September 10, 2002
SUBJECT: Burlington Northern Santa Fe Depot Evaluation

As you may recall, the City received a small grant from the Great American Station Foundation to begin the process of evaluating the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) depot located at 413 East 7th for the purpose of using it as a transit center. BNSF owns the building and Amtrak provides passenger service from this site. BNSF employees also have offices in the building.

As part of the process staff contacted KU Architecture Professor Bill Carswell and contracted with one of his students for a building condition evaluation. A meeting was also held with an Amtrak official on site. While Amtrak has expressed interest in working with transit, BNSF officials continue to be reluctant to proceed much further towards the use of the facility as a transit center.

After review of the building condition evaluation, our committee met to make a final recommendation to the Public Transit Advisory Committee in regard to utilizing the BNSF facility as a transfer center. Our final decision is to recommend that the Lawrence Transit System abandon the idea of utilizing the BNSF facility for the following reasons:

- ❖ A more centralized location for a transfer center is required
- ❖ There has been mixed response from the neighborhood
- ❖ A major reroute, and the related expenses, would be required
- ❖ Significant capital expense would be required from the City for a leased property with an absentee owner
- ❖ Significant issues related to bringing the facility up to code including all ADA requirements
- ❖ Numerous deferred maintenance issues
- ❖ Parking lots will need resurfaced and obstacles removed
- ❖ The concept of providing an intermodal facility is questionable since BNSF is opposed to bike traffic, Amtrak is experiencing financial difficulties that may result in the loss of service and any proposed light rail projects are more than five years down the road
- ❖ We have no current funding sources for this project. Our federal earmark request was denied last year and has been denied by the Senate this fiscal year.