

# *City of Lawrence Coordinated Public Transportation Development Plan*



## *Executive Summary*

*November 2006*

## **City of Lawrence Coordinated Public Transportation Development Plan Executive Summary**

This Coordinated Public Transportation Development Plan, prepared for the City of Lawrence and the University of Kansas (KU), examines and evaluates transit services available in the City and at the University. The study follows a University Transit Task Force report and, while analyzing all aspects of transit service, has a central purpose of answering the question: is it feasible to coordinate and/or consolidate existing City (“The T”) and KU on Wheels (KUOW) services for the best interests of the City and the University? During the course of this study, KU instituted shuttle service to and from a new park-and-ride lot on campus, adding another piece to the transit puzzle.

Given its purpose, the Task Force report focused more on the needs of the college community than on the potential impacts to the City and its transit system. As a broader effort sponsored by both the City and the University, this study’s purpose was to identify the optimal “win-win” situation that meets the needs and addresses the concerns of both parties. The study findings include immediate and near-term action items as well as mid to long-range implementation strategies.

This Executive Summary first presents the key findings and recommendations of the study. It then summarizes findings from each major task in the study, including:

- A comprehensive operational analysis
- Public outreach to various stakeholder groups
- Analysis of peer transit/university transit systems
- On-board surveys of the T, KUOW, and the park-and-ride shuttle
- Governance and funding options
- Service alternatives and recommendations
- Financial plan
- Transition plan.

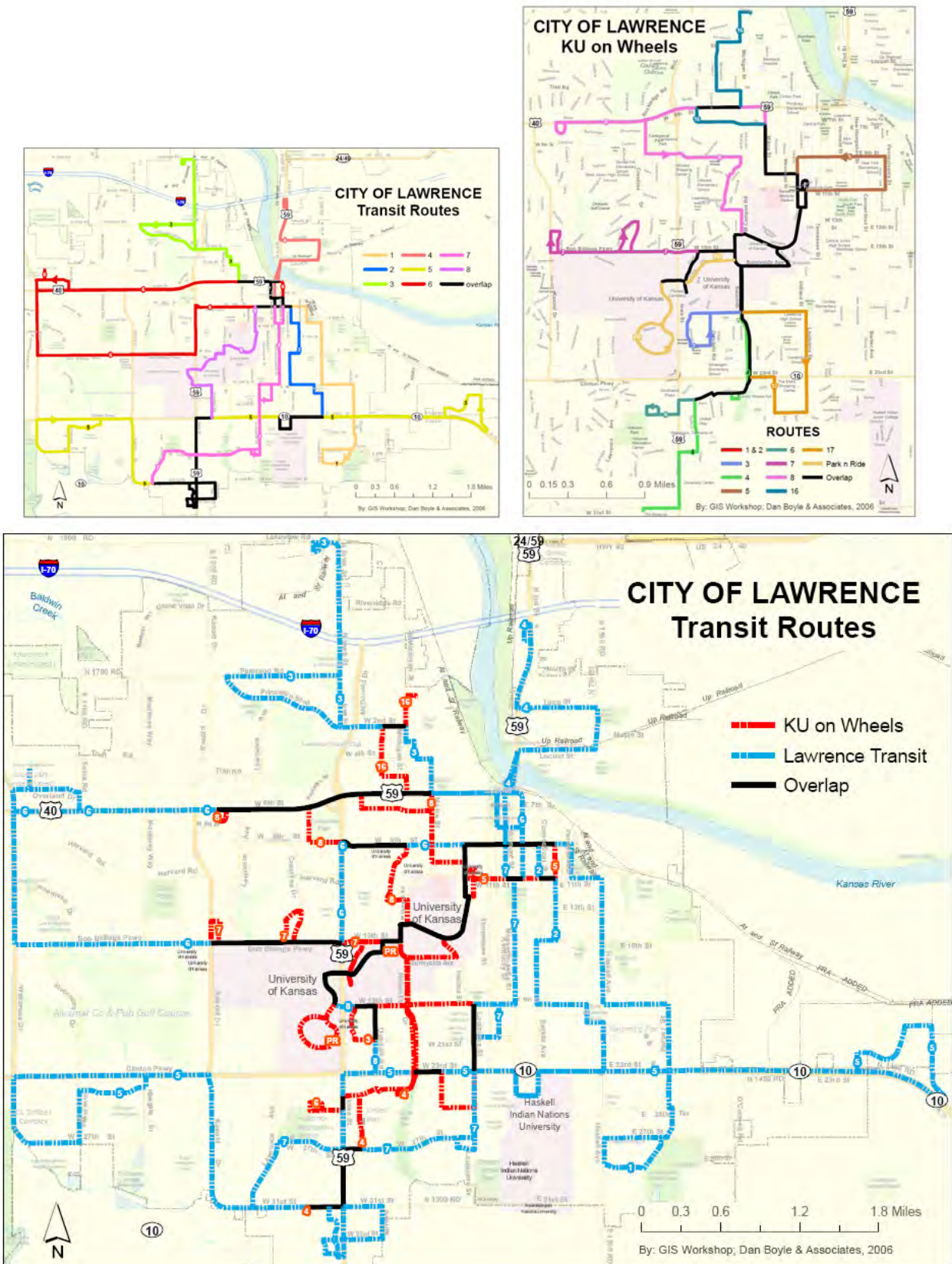
The complete report provides voluminous detail on individual study elements.

### **Key Findings and Recommendations**

**The study recommends that the City and the University pursue a phased integration of all transit services in Lawrence**, including those operated by the T, KUOW, and KU. The benefits that can be derived from treating the T and KUOW transit systems as a single transit network, and some pitfalls, are presented in greater detail in this section.

First, **an integrated transit system results in an immediate expansion of transit options** from the point of view of the riders of both systems. The top two maps in Figure 1 show the current T and KUOW transit routes, respectively, while the larger map at the bottom shows the combined transit network that would result simply from integration, without any additional improvements. The blue lines on the bottom map of Figure 1 represent additional T routes for current KUOW riders, and the red lines represent additional K routes for current T riders. Transfer opportunities and general mobility via transit are significantly enhanced by a combined system.

Figure 1



Second, while it is clear that the T and KUOW have different markets, **these markets overlap to a much greater degree than is often supposed.** KU students clearly need to get from home to class and back, but they also need to work, shop, and entertain. The KUOW system has as one of its basic principles to connect student residences with campus, and K routes serve shopping and employment areas only incidentally. Students are less apt to rely on transit if they cannot get everywhere they need to go, including to off-campus employment and major shopping areas. A single transit network would operate without the home-to-campus restriction and be better able to meet student needs.

Third, **KU employees need to get to campus and have made it clear that the KUOW system does not work for them.** Establishing new routes that connect the city with the campus, enhancing frequency on routes that now serve the campus, creating new and better connections between routes, and streamlining duplicative service are strategies that work to the benefit of the City, the University, and the students. The journey to work is also important for current T riders; as revealed by the on-board survey, 47 percent of T riders are traveling to or from work. **Enhanced frequency on existing T routes** (including, at a minimum, Route 5, Route 7, and Route 8) **will benefit existing transit riders who rely on the bus to get to work.** Extended evening service until 11:00 p.m. on core T routes, enhanced connections and integration of the transit systems will also open new employment opportunities reachable by public transportation.

Fourth, **a single transit network offers greater flexibility** to meet the needs of a geographically expanding student base. Apartment complexes geared toward students have spread westward, and it is difficult to serve these outlying complexes. Due to the distance involved, a route may need two buses, and the student population at a given complex may not justify this level of service. KUOW has been very careful to live within its means and has had to cut low-performing routes and forego serving promising areas due to budget concerns.

Fifth, **a single transit network can design routes that serve multiple constituencies.** Several of the route concepts discussed under Service Alternatives take advantage of the single network concept to meet multiple needs. For example, one proposed new route would provide a direct connection between KU and The Legends apartment complex as well as others along Wakarusa, and would also provide a much-needed north-south connection along Wakarusa. A second proposed new route would provide a direct connection between KU and the retail complex at 31<sup>st</sup> & Iowa while also serving The Reserve and allowing a largely duplicative KUOW route to be discontinued or truncated. As the project team went through the process of designing alternatives, it quickly became apparent that the single transit network concept improved transit's ability to meet diverse mobility needs.

Sixth, **system integration allows the City to qualify for additional federal and (potentially in the future) state funding and to take full advantage of the student contributions,** meeting the federal operating matching requirements of local recipients. This contributes to greater flexibility in how federal funding can be used to cover capital and operating expenses. The City should also experience some long term savings in incremental costs as current expenses are shared, or spread out, over a larger amount of service.

Seventh, several benefits accrue to the University and its students. **The old buses will be replaced and a solid replacement plan will ensure there is no recurrence of the existing condition.** The long-term capital replacement plan is augmented by the funding increases directly related to the ridership of the students. **The students will no longer pay a fare, or need to purchase passes, to ride any bus in the community. Transit improvements will**

**assist the University in pursuing its goal of not building additional costly parking structures** on campus. And, all federal requirements will be managed by the new governance structure

The pitfalls of a single transit network center around treating the network as an undifferentiated whole. Two examples may help illustrate this.

The first pitfall is to operate the same level of service on all routes year-round. On most municipal or regional transit systems, ridership is somewhat lighter in the summer than during other times, but routes serving a university experience a significant drop-off in ridership in the summer. KUOW operates skeleton service during the summer session and does not operate at all when school is not in session. This study would address the year-round issue by operating the KUOW summer schedule when school is not in session. This strategy, along with the addition and improved frequency of T routes serving the campus is the best solution to the dilemma of meeting employee needs in the context of the most efficient operating strategies.

The second pitfall is to ignore the chief function and structure of KUOW routes. These routes are timed around class times and are structured to operate in “limited-stop” fashion to and from campus. It is appropriate to add one or two stops to provide transfer opportunities, but these routes should continue to offer the fastest trip possible to and from campus, and should not be converted to typical transit routes that stop every two or three blocks.

How can an integrated transit network be achieved, and what types of improvements are possible? Based upon stakeholder input, guiding principles for this study, and the need for a broad-based program, the study developed prioritized packages of recommended actions under four scenarios over the next five years. These scenarios are defined as follows:

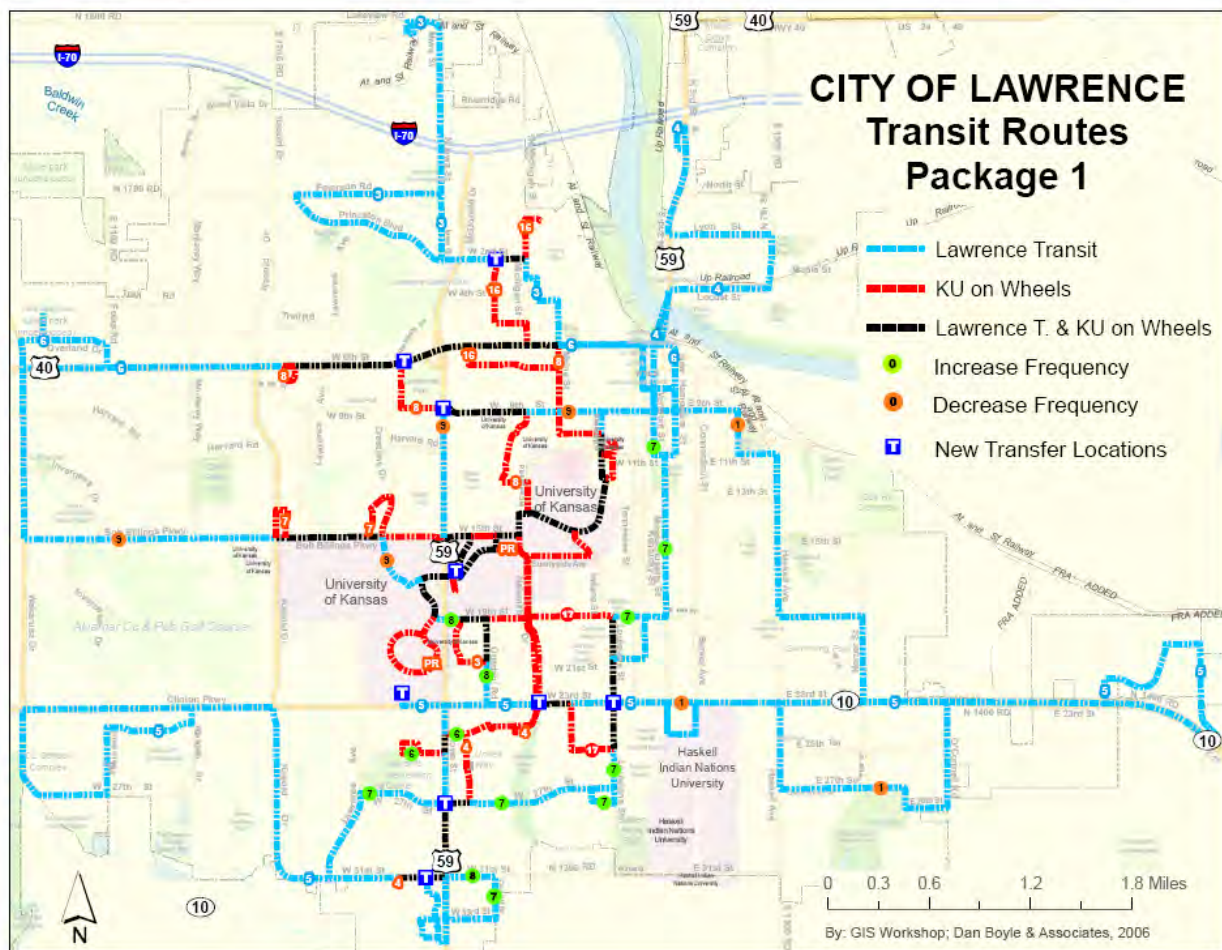
- Package 1: No increase in transit revenue hours
- Package 2: 15,000 additional transit revenue hours (20 percent above current service levels for LTS and KUOW combined)
- Package 3: 25,000 additional transit revenue hours (33 percent above current service levels for LTS and KUOW combined)
- Package 4: Unconstrained increase in transit revenue hours

Packages 2, 3, and 4 build on Package 1. Package 1 essentially contains the changes we would make to improve system efficiency now without system integration.

Package 1 addresses changes in transit services under a zero-sum game in which no additional transit funding is available and improvements can be made only through reallocation of resources from poorly performing routes. Package 1 is a consolidation package that can be implemented without system integration, although joint acceptance of passes would be desirable. Figure 2 shows the transit network under Package 1, which includes the following changes:

- Combine T Routes 1 and 2 (maintaining service to HINU) and operate every 60 minutes instead of every 40 minutes
- Improve frequency on T Route 7 from every 80 minutes to every 60 minutes
- Improve frequency on T Route 8 from every 80 minutes to every 40 minutes.
- Discontinue K Route 5 to Downtown and increase frequency on K Route 6 from every 30 minutes to every 20 minutes
- Add a minor deviation to T Route 5 to serve the KU park-and-ride lot
- Split Route 6 into two routes: Route 6 via 6<sup>th</sup> Street and Route 9 via 9<sup>th</sup>/Iowa/Bob Billings/Wakarusa with a deviation into the KU campus. Operate Route 9 every 60 minutes instead of every 40 minutes.

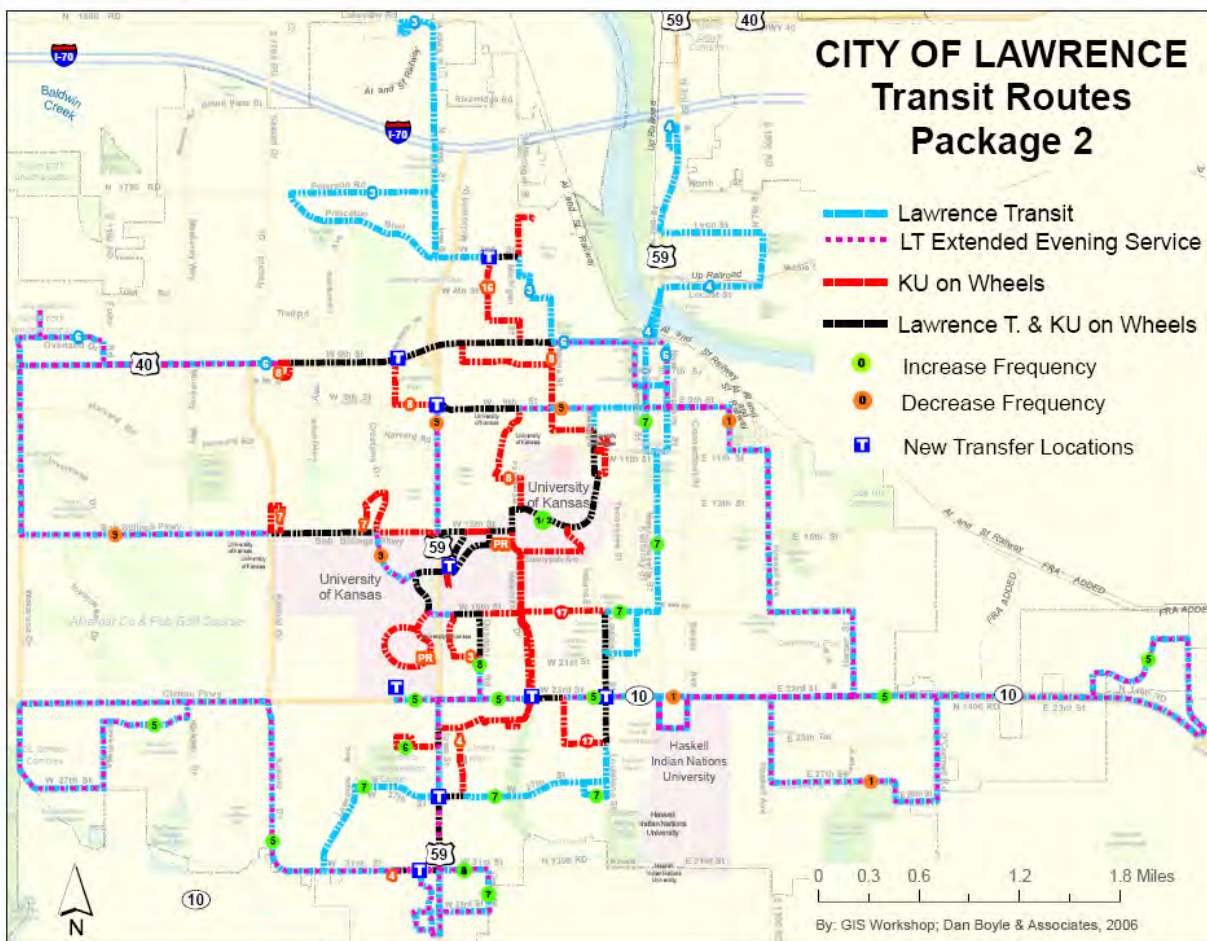
Figure 2



Package 2 assumes that operating funding will be increased by 25 percent over the next five years, and shows what transit service improvements can be purchased with this funding increase. Package 2 assumes the adoption of an unlimited access program for KU students (which triggers the added buses on K Route 1/2), KU funding for a similar program for faculty and staff, and joint acceptance of T and KUOW passes on both systems. This package includes the following changes, shown in Figure 3:

- Add four buses on K Route 1/2 between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Add year-round weekday service on core K routes
- Improve Route 5 frequency to 30 minutes. This route is tight now in terms of time and could experience delays in serving the KU Park-and-ride lot.
- Provide evening service on core T Routes (Routes 1, 5, 6, 8, and 9) until 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Continue to rely on K Route 15 to provide evening service on combined routes on campus.
- Expand park-and-ride service on campus. Add service at the current lot and establish two new park-and-ride lots.

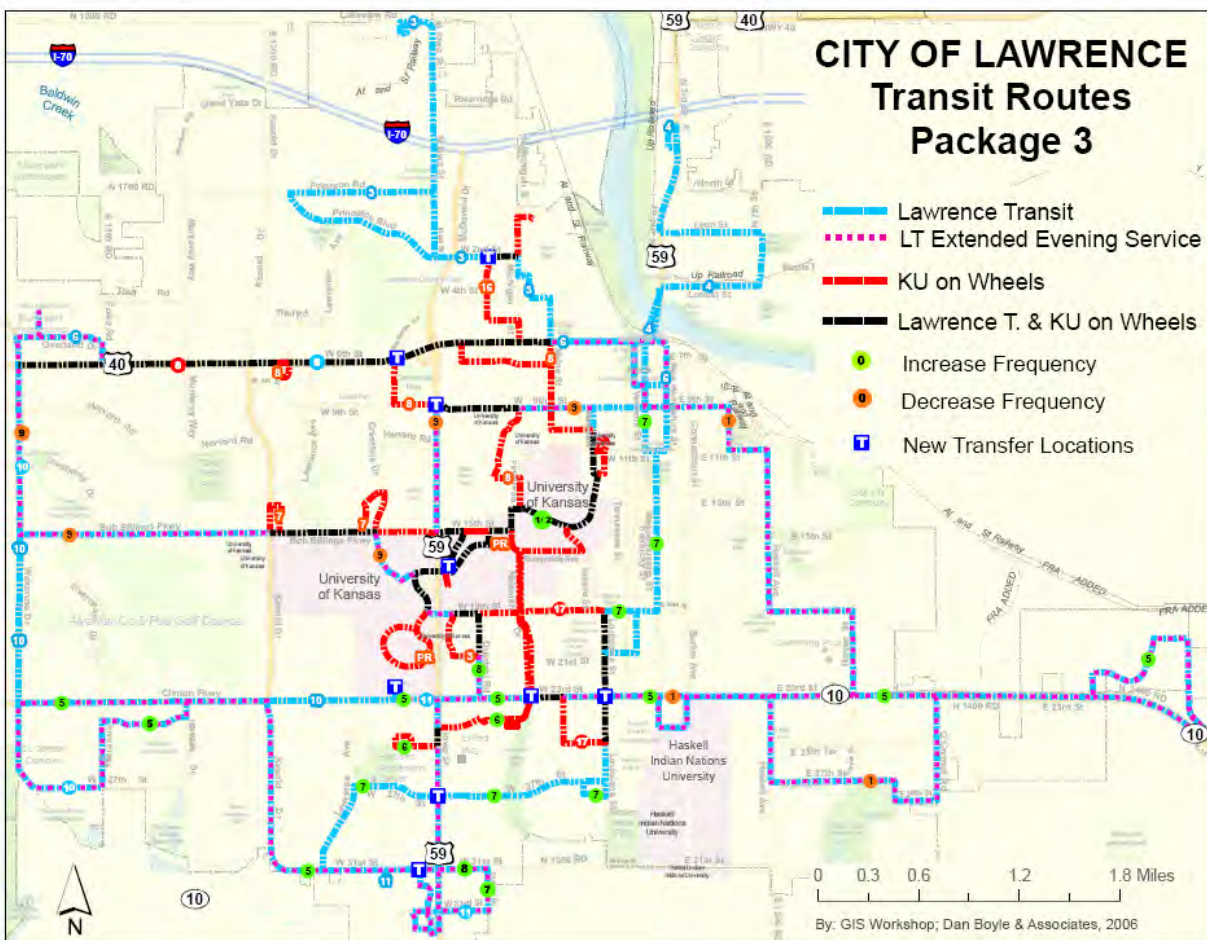
Figure 3



Package 3 assumes that operating funding will be increased by 33 percent over the next five years, and shows what transit service improvements can be purchased with this funding increase. Package 3 is the recommended service package. This package includes the elements in Package 2 (moved up in terms of implementation date) plus the following changes, shown in Figure 4:

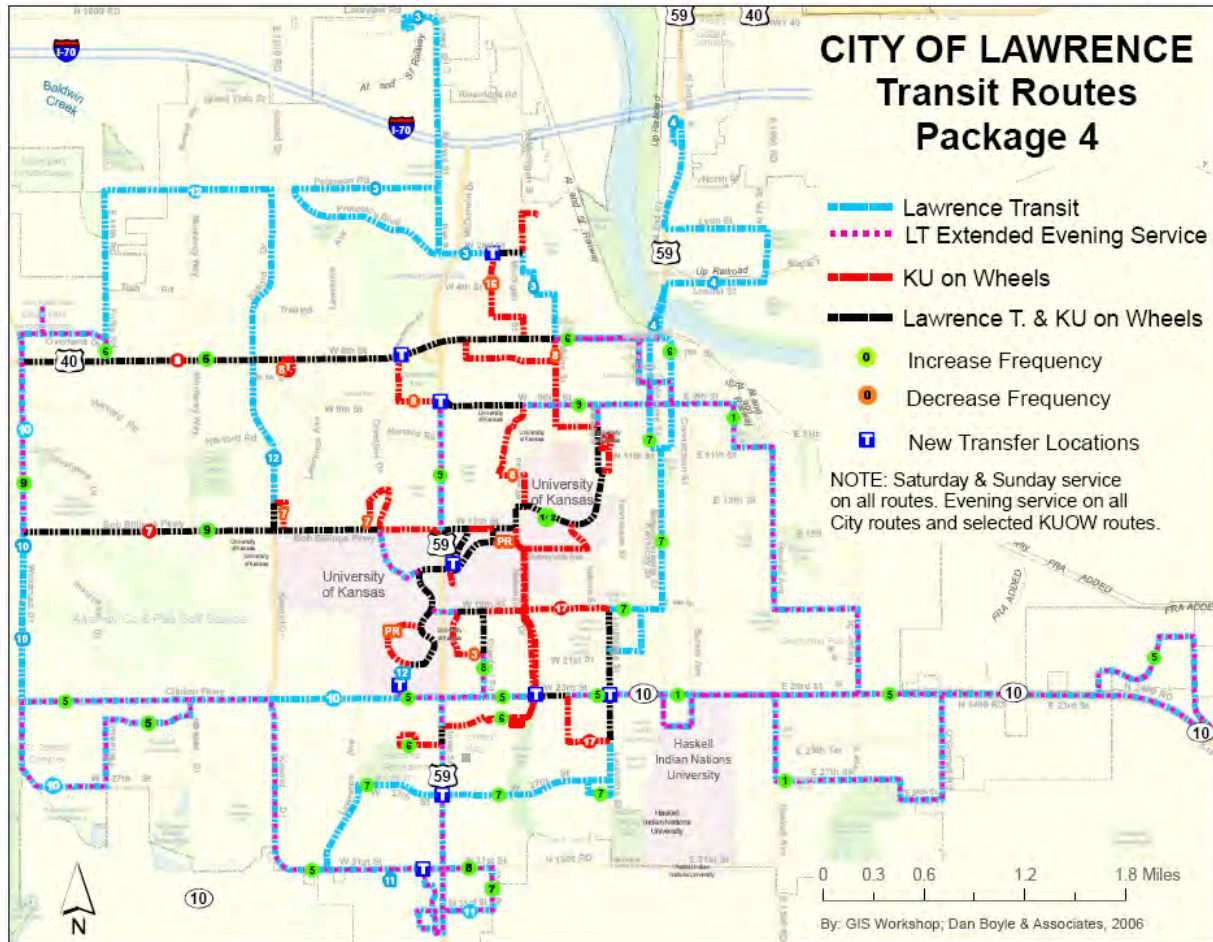
- Begin a new Route 10 from the KU Park-and-ride west to the Legends Apartment Complex and north on Wakarusa. This provides new direct transit service between campus and major apartment complexes and introduces a true north-south crosstown route on Wakarusa.
- Begin a new Route 11 from the KU Park-and-ride south to the 31<sup>st</sup> & Iowa retail complex, also serving The Legends.
- In conjunction with Route 11, cut back K Route 4 to Colony Woods Apartments or discontinue and increase frequency on K Route 6 to every 15 minutes.
- In conjunction with Route 11, streamline Route 8 and increase frequency to every 30 minutes.
- Extend K Route 8 via 6<sup>th</sup> Street to Wakarusa, to provide a much-needed direct connection from West Lawrence to the heart of the KU campus. Streamline the route via its current inbound route.

Figure 4



Package 4 includes desired changes that cannot be included within Package 3 over the next five years, to acknowledge that there are continued needs that cannot be met with current or projected resources. Sunday service, improved frequency on selected routes, and new and extended routes are all included in Package 4, shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5



How will the service improvements in Packages 2 and 3 be funded? The short answer is through a combination of student fees, increased parking fees for KU faculty and staff, and increased contributions from the City. Table 1 summarizes the average additional funding needed for transit over the next five years by funding source.

One interesting observation in Table 1 is that the status quo option by itself is costly. The City currently contributes \$1.14 million to transit, while current student fees account for \$1.07 million and the University pays \$300,000. Increases under the status quo option are related to inflation (a three percent annual rate is assumed), conversion to an unlimited access program funded by student fees, vehicle replacement, and a new operations and maintenance facility. Table 1 also indicates that the local share of operating and capital costs accounts for only about half of transit's costs. Much of transit's funding comes from other sources, including Federal assistance and the farebox.

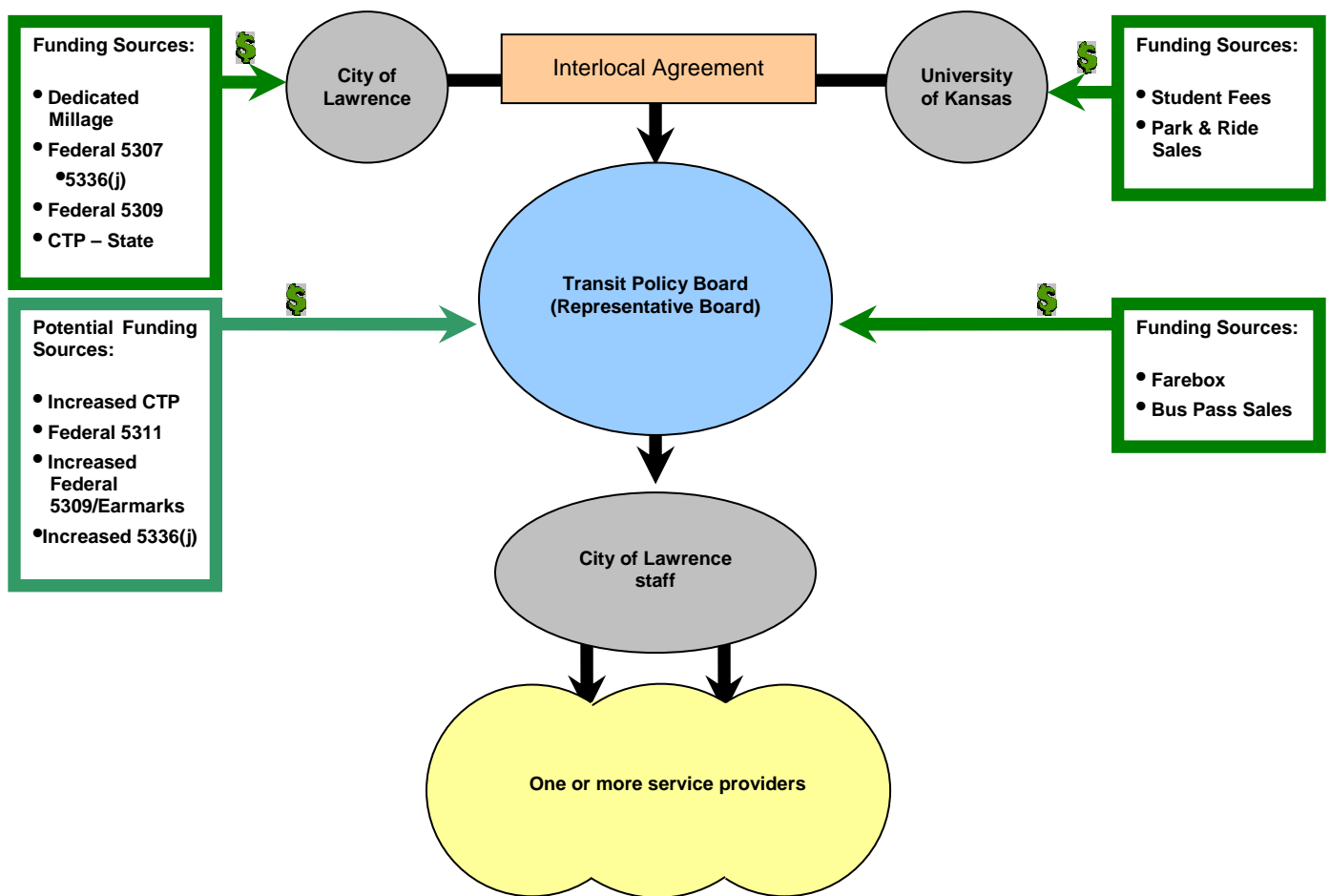
Capital costs include vehicle replacement programs and purchase of new vehicles plus a new operations and maintenance facility. Vehicle replacement accounts for a significant portion of the student fee contribution. The local match (\$1.4 million) for the operations and maintenance facility would be shared by the City and the University and is a major portion of their capital expenses.

**Table 1**  
**Average Annual Local Funding Needs over Next**  
**Five Years by Source and Package**

Funding Category	Average Annual Cost	Average Annual Local Funding		
		City	Student Fees	KU
Package 1: Status Quo/Restructuring Plus Vehicle Replacement Program and Unlimited Access Program for KU Students				
Capital	\$3,442,544	\$408,691	\$602,132	\$140,000
Operating	\$5,424,428	\$1,221,238	\$2,064,645	\$328,105
Capital and Operating	\$8,866,972	\$1,629,929	\$2,666,777	\$468,105
Package 2: 20% Service Increase, Extend Unlimited Access Program to KU Faculty and Staff				
Capital	\$4,164,449	\$509,014	\$1,085,062	\$278,854
Operating	\$6,362,123	\$1,370,960	\$2,028,213	\$1,087,550
Capital and Operating	\$10,526,572	\$1,879,974	\$3,113,275	\$1,366,404
Package 3: 33% Service Increase, Extend Unlimited Access to KU Faculty and Staff				
Capital	\$4,303,899	\$648,463	\$1,085,062	\$278,854
Operating	\$6,892,595	\$1,781,157	\$2,085,764	\$1,150,277
Capital and Operating	\$11,196,494	\$2,429,620	\$3,170,826	\$1,429,131

An integrated transit system raises questions regarding governance. The study developed several options, and a consensus formed around an alternative that would create one representative board through an interlocal agreement between the City and the University to oversee the administration and operation of the transit service for the entire City of Lawrence and the University of Kansas campus. The board's membership would consist of representation from the City, the University, and the students. Service schedules and all operational and service policies would be approved by the policy board, and the policy board would directly collect and account for various funding sources such as farebox revenues and bus pass sales. City staff would administer and manage the day-to-day operation of the transit service. Figure 6 illustrates the governing structure for the proposed alternative.

**Figure 6**  
**Alternative 4:**  
**One System, Separate Funding Sources, One Representative Policy Board**



The transition plan is the final element of the study. It recommends a phased approach toward the recommended governance alternative and the new governing policy board. The interim phase would include steps toward full integration into a single transit system over a period of two to three years.

The remaining sections summarize findings of individual elements of the study.

## Route Profiles

Weekday ridership is approximately six times greater and productivity is approximately four times greater on the KUOW routes compared to the LTS routes. On a typical weekday in April 2006, KUOW carried 8,342 riders, or 39.7 boardings per revenue hour, and LTS carried 1,430 riders, or 10.3 boardings per revenue hour. On Saturday, LTS carried 1,121 riders, or 8.0 boardings per revenue hour.

Among LTS routes, Route 6 along 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets has the highest weekday ridership while Route 8, serving downtown, KU, and South Iowa, has the highest weekday productivity. Among KUOW routes, Route 1/2 (Campus Express) has the highest weekday ridership and productivity. KUOW routes that serve both the dormitories along Engel Road and the heart of campus along Jayhawk Boulevard are generally among the routes with the highest ridership and productivity.

Farebox recovery ratio, which measures the percentage of operating cost paid for by farebox revenue, is also much higher on KUOW routes than on LTS routes. A mixture of federal, state, and local funding provides the subsidy for LTS, while student fees are the subsidy source for KUOW.

Ridership and productivity trends since 2004 show a different picture. LTS average weekday ridership has increased by 37 percent and productivity has risen by 34 percent. KUOW average weekday ridership has decreased by 24 percent and productivity has declined by 16 percent. Some of the KUOW ridership decrease is related to reduced levels of service (which is why the productivity decrease is less than the ridership decrease), but reduced levels of service account for only about 1/3 of the ridership decrease.

An analysis of ADA complementary paratransit service shows two systems operating in essentially the same environment, each with a different focus and orientation but with overlapping constituencies. This offers both opportunity and challenge in terms of coordination between the two services. Lawrence T-Lift is operating at reasonably high levels of service, given no apparent complaints, a good track record of on-time performance and comparatively low levels of trip cancellations and no-shows. High levels of trip cancellation are a concern on the KUOW Lift Van, possibly suggesting that students attempt to find other means of transport whenever possible. There may be other issues involved in the cancellation rate but little information was available to delve further into this. A second Lift Van issue that emerges is the very modest number of students involved, potentially just 20 students. T-Lift dispatchers report high utilization of their service to campus, which suggests that the T-Lift is carrying additional KU students not carried by the KU Lift Van. Staff of the Services for Students with Disabilities department and Lawrence Transit staff are already coordinating around the ADA application process. This ensures that knowledge of the T-Lift ADA application and certification processes will benefit all concerned and provides a working example of collaborative services between the University and the City around transit.

The Residential Transit Orientation Index (RTOI) reveals that the neighborhoods with the greatest orientation toward transit use are served by existing T and KUOW routes. The RTOI also indicates that many lightly-used routes serve neighborhoods with low transit orientation.

## Public Outreach Activities, Phase I

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.

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 were to clarify the benefits of integration and to address legitimate concerns regarding potential negative impacts. Part of the challenge involved building trust among stakeholders. 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.

## **Peer Findings**

The public outreach efforts in the first phase of this study revealed several concerns related to coordination and/or consolidation of the City and University transit systems, within a context of general support for enhanced integration of transit services. Riders want to get from point A to point B as quickly as possible for a reasonable cost, and are generally indifferent to how transit is organized. Several stakeholders did raise finance, governance, and implementation issues.

In response to these concerns, the project team broadened the scope of a planned review of peer transit systems and universities. Team members contacted all Big 12 universities and the transit agencies serving these communities to gain a greater understanding of how transit agencies and universities work together (or not) to provide mobility for students, faculty, and staff as well as for the general public. The peer review focus is on Big 12 universities because their experiences would have the greatest relevance for the University of Kansas. Three other universities/communities (University of Illinois/Champaign/Urbana, University of Michigan/Ann Arbor, and Michigan State University/Lansing) were added to the peer list because both have had long-running, successful programs.

There is no one model for coordination of transit in a university setting. Peer findings reported in this section shed light on issues raised regarding potential coordination and/or consolidation of transit services in Lawrence. Implications for some of the major issues are discussed below.

The primary motivation for transit agencies to become involved in campus transit services was to increase ridership by tapping into an underserved market of college students. Universities reported a wider variety of motivations, including improved access, improved circulation on campus, reduced need for parking, access to transit agency expertise, and access to capital

funds. As programs have continued, many universities have achieved benefits beyond those initially targeted.

Use of student fees to fund unlimited access to campus and/or citywide transit is a common model at peer universities. Several peers transfer at least a portion of the proceeds of the fees to the transit agency. KU on Wheels is partially funded through student fees, but purchase of a semester pass or payment of the cash fare is required for KUOW buses and an additional payment is needed to ride the Lawrence Transit System.

The ability of an unlimited access program to reduce the need for parking construction on campus was specifically mentioned by several peers and was a side benefit to others. The University of Colorado noted that it has not built a parking garage since 1991.

Issues of control and governance are not unique to KU and Lawrence. The range of governance models among the peer institutions is interesting. The Iowa State model in which the City, the University, and the students have equal representation on the governing board has been cited in KU's Transit Task Force. Other models invest final authority over routes on campus with the University or with the students. The Denver RTD model is an example of the transit agency retaining control. Clearly, there are examples to address the issues of control that arose in the first round of public outreach; the problem is not unsolvable.

The challenge of upgrading capital equipment is not uncommon among peers. New vehicles are not always the initial answer (and sometimes not even the final answer), but a vehicle replacement program and contract language stating that similar types of vehicles be used for city and campus service are among the solutions to this problem.

Development of partnerships and trusts among all entities (transit, the university, and the students) has also been faced at many peers. Support of the students and high-level university administrators have been very important in making the decision to begin such partnerships. The peer results are cautionary regarding the need for continued communication and cooperation under whatever form of governance is selected.

## **T Survey Findings**

T riders are using transit primarily for work and school trips on weekdays. Cash is by far the most common fare payment method. Most riders walk to and from their origin and destination, and transfer activity is relatively low. T riders tend to ride frequently. The distribution of old and new riders is weighted more toward new riders on The T than on most transit systems: there is an even split in terms of those using the system for more than one year and less than one year.

The survey included questions to gain a greater understanding of riders' decision-making processes, values, and preferences. Convenience and lack of other choices are the major reasons that riders choose The T. Walk and get a ride with someone else are the most common alternate modes, and 15 percent of riders report that they would not make this trip if the bus were not available. The majority of riders prefer a fare increase over weekday or weekend service cuts if revenues need to be brought more into line with costs. A plurality (47 percent) do not view access to KU on Wheels as important, but one-third are not sure.

In terms of demographics, the majority of T riders are male and white, do not have a car available for this trip, and have a household income under \$25,000. Distribution of rider ages is

weighted toward those of working age, with only nine percent of riders under 18 and four percent age 65 or older.

T riders are very pleased with the service. On a scale of one (very poor) to five (excellent), respondents rate The T service at an average of 4.22, an unusually high rating. The highest rated items are operator courtesy, ability to find a seat, safety on the bus and at stops, and cleanliness. Average scores for these four items all reached 4.33 or better. The lowest ratings among all service elements are for span of service (3.63) and time waiting for the bus (3.77), but even these lowest scores are respectable. Sunday service, improved frequency, and later evening service were the most requested improvement among T riders. An analysis of performance versus importance for the eleven service attributes indicates that frequency and days and hours of service are the most critical elements in terms of needed improvements.

### **KUOW Survey Findings**

KUOW riders are using transit primarily to get to and from class. KUOW riders tend to ride frequently. The majority of KUOW are new to the system (within the past six months).

The survey included questions to gain a greater understanding of riders' decision-making processes, values, and preferences. Convenience is by far the major reason that riders choose KUOW. Cost is an important factor for park-and-ride users. Respondents prefer the current system of paying (a combination of student fees and bus pass purchase) to a system based on (higher) student fees only. KUOW riders are split on the importance of access to a citywide transit system and are also split on willingness to pay more for evening and weekend service.

In terms of demographics, 45 percent of KUOW riders are freshmen. Most (59 percent) are female and most (53 percent) have a car available for this trip. Park-and-ride respondents are more evenly distributed in terms of year at KU, and are much more likely (84 percent) to report having a car available for this trip. At least 95 percent of respondents on both KUOW and the park-and-ride shuttle are KU students.

KUOW riders are pleased with the service. On a scale of one (very poor) to five (excellent), respondents rate KUOW service at an average of 3.88. The highest rated items are safety at stops, safety on the bus, and operator courtesy. Average scores for these four items all are 4.1 or better. The lowest ratings among all service elements are for time waiting for the bus (3.31) and reliability (3.49). Improved frequency, expanded routes, and later evening service were the most requested improvement among KUOW riders. An analysis of performance versus importance for the eleven service attributes indicates that frequency, reliability, and bus cleanliness and comfort are the most critical elements in terms of needed improvements.

### **Governance and Funding**

Major characteristics of preferred transit governing structures determined from the feedback and information gathered from a variety of sources include the following:

- Integrated service delivery
- Improved customer service
- Coordinated or contracted service
- Representation on policy/decision-making board
- Shared funding

The following summarizes the tasks completed in developing and evaluating the governing and funding alternatives described in this section. In addition, general conclusions regarding the characteristics of the governance structures are noted.

- Input from four separate sources (stakeholders, community and current riders, peer universities, and best industry practices) were considered in analyzing and establishing the potential governance alternatives and funding resources.
- Five governance alternatives were developed and defined using the “Ladder of Public Service Coordination” as a model for public service management.
- Current and potential funding sources, including the degree of potential or possible increases, are identified.
- Potential advantages and disadvantages for each governance alternative are identified.
- General observations of governance alternatives include:
  - As coordination increases, so do the opportunities to streamline and improve the transit system.
  - Many potential disadvantages in some alternatives become advantages in other alternative scenarios.
  - The ability to have common priorities and policies in management and service results in a more user-friendly system.
- General observations regarding funding resources include:
  - The ability to leverage existing resources increases with improved coordination.
  - Leveraging can occur with the proposed CTP formula change.
  - The combined ridership and other statistical data will likely result in increased formula funding under FTA section 5336(j).
  - The ability to access more potential revenue sources increases as the community ascends the ladder of service coordination.
  - The ability to have common priorities and policies in funding can improve efficiency.
  - There are options that allow existing stakeholders to retain a reasonable level of influence and oversight while still improving the coordination of management and services in the community.

The project team presented these governance alternatives in September 2006 at public meetings and at roundtables with City staff, KU Vice Provosts, and Transportation Board students. The general public did not express a real preference; riders and members of the public were more concerned with service on the street than with governance issues. As we met with the other stakeholders, a consensus emerged.

City, University, and student representatives all agreed that the status quo was not acceptable. Alternatives 3a and 3b were rejected because each created an imbalanced relationship. A transit authority held theoretical appeal, but all parties felt that Alternative 5 (which would create a transit authority, possibly with separate funding power) would not be feasible at this point in time or possibly ever.

The consensus of these stakeholders was that Alternative 4, creating a single system with a single representative policy board, would be the best choice. Alternative 2, separate but coordinated systems, was perceived as a potential first step toward the ultimate adoption of Alternative 4.

## Draft Program of Improvements for Lawrence and KU

This study's strategies and recommendations needed to be multi-faceted to address the various needs identified through the stakeholder outreach process. Concentrating on a single strategy (such as increased frequency or service to campus) would have been insufficient. The various service packages were summarized earlier in this executive summary.

### Transition Plan

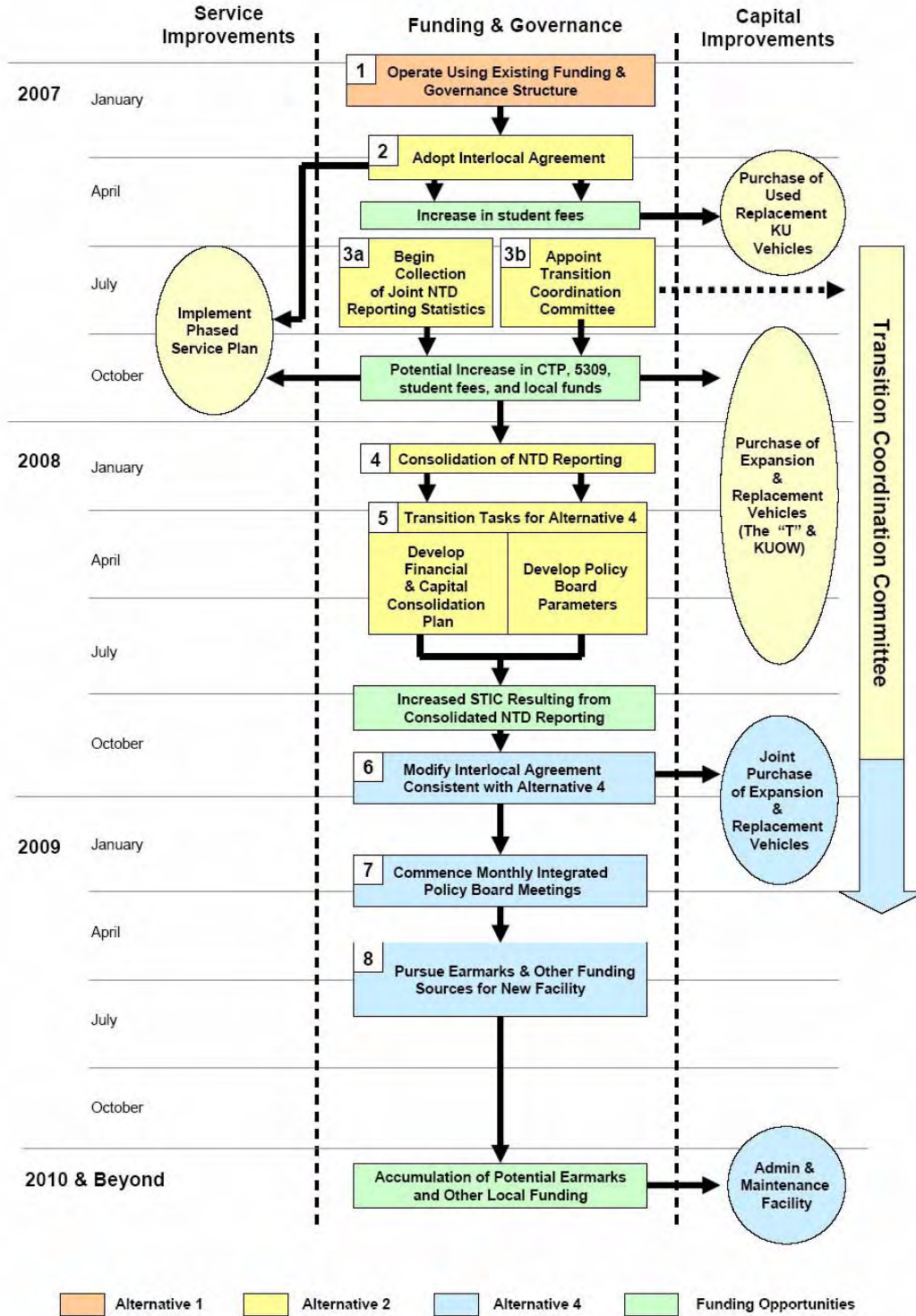
There is general agreement that a transition to an interim governing structure (Alternative 2) would be necessary before ultimately transitioning to Alternative 4. The proposed transition plan provides a blueprint for the City of Lawrence and KU in their effort to transition from their existing operating structures to a temporary Alternative 2 scenario and then to an Alternative 4 scenario within two to three years.

The flowchart in Figure 7 illustrates the proposed transition plan, which reflects 8 major actions that will be required to facilitate transition from the current governing and funding structure to Alternative 4. In addition, the actions are associated with a proposed timeline for implementation. The critical actions for facilitating transition are reflected under funding and governance while actions under service and capital improvements result from funding and governing actions. The actions in the flowchart are color-coded to represent the alternative governing structure under which each action will take place. In addition, new or increased funding opportunities are also color-coded. The color codes in the flowchart are summarized as follows:

- Alternative 1 (current governing structure) – orange
- Alternative 2 – yellow
- Alternative 4 – blue
- New or increased funding opportunities – green

Figure 7

Figure 1  
Lawrence Coordinated Transit Funding & Governing Transition Plan



## Financial Plan

Noteworthy highlights of the financial plan include the following:

- Both systems will experience changes in fare and pass policies.
  - The T reflects a change that increases the current base fare from \$0.50 to \$1.00 by July 2008, and includes similar increases for all fare categories and passes.
  - For KUOW, by the fall semester of 2007, student fares and passes will be eliminated and replaced by increased student fees. All students can then ride for free on either bus system as long as they have their student identification. As noted above, an increase of \$50 per semester in parking fees for KU faculty and staff will allow them to ride for free on any bus system as long as they have university identification.
- The proposed student fee at KU will be \$53.28 per semester under the status quo option. This is close to the average fee charged by peer universities with unlimited access programs, but noticeable lower than the high of \$60.00 charged to Texas A&M students. The student fee at KU would be \$62.21 per semester under the 20 percent service growth scenario and \$63.36 under the 33 percent service growth scenario. In any scenario, the plan assumes that the fee will remain constant over the five years addressed by the plan.
- The financial plan reflects, or prepares for, a phased capital replacement program for both transit systems, ensuring that there will NOT be a need for large one-time bus purchases in the future.
- The older and obsolete buses currently in use for the KUOW services are replaced within the first year, in the most economic means feasible.
- The coordination and cooperation is immediately noticeable with shared revenues, loans, and match capabilities included in the plan.
- Combined budgets and reporting of the two systems will increase formula funding from FTA through the STIC program, and all increases are allocated to the capital replacement program for KUOW/KU. A potential revision to the KDOT CTP formula in FY 2009/10 and would result in an increase in funding for capital program, which is also fully allocated to the KUOW/KU bus replacement program.
- The plan maintains the current programs, including the KUOW, SafeRide, LiftVan, and the Park-and-Ride Shuttle, as well as The T's fixed route and ADA paratransit services.
- Given the nature of the recommended governing alternative, the proposed financial plan essentially combines separate financial plans for The T and KUOW. Although efficiencies are likely to be associated with increasing coordination and consolidation, these potential cost savings cannot be projected with any reasonable level of certainty and, therefore, are not reflected in the financial plan. As a result, the proposed local funding required is believed to be the worst-case scenario and will likely be reduced as coordination and/or consolidation occurs.