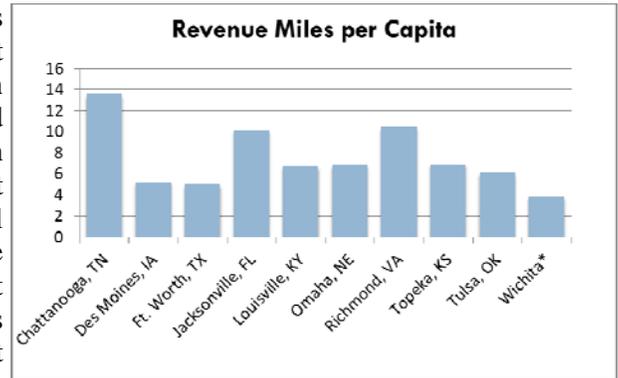


PUBLIC TRANSIT

What is the problem? The current Transit system is underdeveloped and underfunded. Local support is sizable, but has not kept up with increases in costs. The system has relied on loans from other City funds, the use of non-recurring fund balances, fare increases and service adjustments to remain solvent. Since federal funding is based on the service level, past actions have reduced federal funding, increasing the financial pressure on Transit. In addition, many buses are old, expensive to maintain and need to be replaced. The result is a system that provides a relatively low level of service compared to peer cities (see chart to the right) and is not financially sustainable past 2016.



Just to maintain the current system would require an additional \$2.9 million in estimated annual funding. Without this additional funding, service levels would need to be reduced by 24% in 2016 in order to balance the budget, which may include the following steps:

Reduce paratransit services - Currently these services are provided city-wide. However, the City is only required to provide rides within a 3/4 mile radius of bus routes.

Reduce half-price fare discounts - Currently, the City is only required to provide half-price fares to the elderly and disabled during non-peak hours. However, the City practice has been to provide these discounts all day.

Reduce routes - The following routes would be eliminated: North Waco; East 13th St; East Lincoln; and Meridian. In addition, service frequencies on the South Main route would be reduced.

Why is this the best solution for the community? Wichita Transit currently provides two million rides annually. Many of these rides serve residents with disabilities, including the blind. Passengers include the elderly, and those who are unable to drive due to medical or economic reasons. In addition, there are opportunities to use Transit services for economic development, transporting workers to jobs. Finally, input from engagement processes has indicated strong support for an improved Transit system.

Federal funding is a large component of Transit support, but it is largely formula-based and dependent on past service levels. In other words, there is no foreseeable increase in federal funds. Likewise, State funding has been relatively flat for several years. Local funding is \$3.5 million annually, but City fiscal conditions have limited the ability of the City to provide additional support. The local sales tax is the best solution for the community to provide a new and viable funding source.

What would improve as a result of the investment? Having a sales tax for Transit would allow other funds to be used for fleet replacement needs. Wichita Transit currently operates a fleet of 49 buses. Twenty-five (25) buses are beyond their useful life of twelve (12) years old. The overall fleet average age is 8.18 years compared to the industry recommended average age of six years. An aging fleet results in higher operating and maintenance costs and reduced dependability.

Transit service would improve with the investment. In recent years, the development of retail, medical services and jobs has extended toward the outer edges of the city. However, Transit services have not kept pace with this growth, limiting access to jobs, education and medical services for those who ride the bus. This access would improve with additional Transit funding. Increased investment in Transit would improve service to employers. Employment agencies have indicated that lack of Transit is an impediment for many potential workers.

BUDGET

How would the money be spent? This proposal is for 10% of the 1 cent proposed sales tax, or an estimated \$39.8 million in sales tax revenue generated over the five year sales tax period. The funds would stabilize the current system, provide for the replacement of buses, improve efficiency and allow for system expansion to serve new riders. With sales tax funding, Transit service in Wichita for the next five years would be improved, and more resistant to annual service level changes due to volatile or reduced funding. Potential system improvements would enhance system connectivity and service frequencies. Impacted routes would include:

Transit Service Route Improvements—With Sales Tax Allocation	
2015	East 17th Hillside
2016	21st Douglas East Central and West Central Routes West Maple and East 17th Routes Rock Meridian

In 2017, Transit service would be evaluated, including the potential for night service.

What happens at the end of five years? With five years of sales tax funding, Wichita Transit would be on a financially stable footing. Buses would be modern, and fleet age would be within acceptable norms. Through improvements made possible with the supplemental sales tax funding, the system should be serving an increased number of riders. This should leave a system in five years that would be generating more fare box revenue from more passengers, also having higher federal funding due to the increased service level. With an improved service level, the system would be poised to attract even more choice riders in the future.

Ultimately, at the end of the five year period of sales tax support, Transit would likely require some additional amount of support. However, at that time, having experienced the community benefits of an improved system, residents would be better positioned to determine the appropriate future for Transit in Wichita.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Who would be in charge of making sure the money is used as described? The Wichita Transit Advisory Board is made up of citizens including consumers and business leaders appointed by the Mayor and City Council. Their purpose is to provide advice to the Council and City Manager on Transit issues. The Transit system currently has a comprehensive set of performance indicators. Specific performance measures for service improvements will be established and monitored by Transit staff and reviewed by the Wichita Transit Advisory Board to assure an effective and efficient Transit operation.

BENEFITS

How would it benefit the residents in the city/community? A functional Transit system provides many community benefits. Transportation would become more accessible and convenient for persons without the ability to drive. This would improve accessibility to jobs, medical treatment, education and recreation. Business would benefit from access to a larger labor pool. Although parking and traffic congestion are not as significant in Wichita as in other communities, enhanced public transportation would improve those areas. Air quality improves with increased use of public transportation. A more effective and convenient public transportation system would attract more choice riders. Often this means younger professionals, who often look for accessible and affordable transit systems when choosing where to live.