



RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PUBLIC TRANSIT PROPOSITION

Q: What is the proposition slated for the April 6, 2010 ballot?

A: Voters of St. Louis County will decide whether or not to authorize a one-half of one percent sales tax increase for restoring, operating and expanding MetroLink, MetroBus, and disabled and senior public transportation.

Q: Why are voters addressing this issue again after they rejected it in November 2008?

A: After a similar proposition was defeated by voters in November 2008, Metro was forced to cut public transit service by one-third in Missouri, impacting thousands of transit riders. Emergency funding from the state of Missouri and the federal government restored some of the transit service, but the funds will run out in May 2010. If additional funding is not available, Metro will be forced to make substantial cuts in transit service again.

Q: How much will the proposition generate in new revenues and what will it be used for?

A: The new tax will generate approximately \$75 million a year for public transportation. In addition, the new tax will trigger another \$8 million in tax revenue from the city of St. Louis, from a previous tax passed in 1997. This new revenue will restore MetroLink, MetroBus and Call-A-Ride services previously cut in 2009 and allow for future expansion of these services.

Q: If the proposition passes, will there be future service reductions?

A: No.

Q: What kind of expanded public transit service will there be?

A: All current modes of transit—MetroBus, MetroLink and Metro Call-A-Ride—will be enhanced.

Q: Where will new MetroLink and MetroBus routes go?

A: MetroBus and MetroLink routes, as well as new options such as Bus Rapid Transit, will be determined in conjunction with regional partners and the federal government. An expansion of light rail from Clayton to the West Port area, as well as a North Side/South Side route have been identified as possibilities.

Q: What is Bus Rapid Transit?

A: Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is higher-capacity bus service. It uses buses that are larger than the current MetroBus fleet, and can carry more passengers per vehicle. These buses also make fewer stops and use dedicated transit plazas that are similar to MetroLink stations. BRT has more flexibility and lower capital investment than light rail.

Q: Is public transit subsidized?

A: As with many public facilities such as highways, bridges and libraries, public transit is supported, in part, by tax dollars. In fact, no public transit system in the world is totally self-sufficient. While Metro does require tax dollars for its operations, it has one of the lowest subsidies per passenger in the United States.

Q: Is there much fare box evasion?

A: According to Metro statistics, fare box evasion is estimated to be less than 5% of total passengers. The current proof-of-payment system is the transit industry standard, and only a costly barrier system would be more effective. Currently, funding for such a system is not available.

Q: How safe are transit stations?

A: Crime on the public transit system is very low, according to Metro statistics—especially compared with crime statistics of the communities through which the system travels. The perception of crime on Metro is higher among those who do not use the system than those who are regular riders.

Q: Does public transit relieve traffic congestion?

A: Each day 45,000 fewer vehicles are on our region's highways because of people who take Metro Transit. This makes our highways less crowded and gives many a convenient way to get to where they need to go.

Q: Does public transit help to improve air quality?

A: A single person, commuting alone by car, who switches a 20-mile round trip commute to existing public transportation, can reduce his or her annual CO₂ emissions by 4,800 pounds per year, equal to a 10% reduction in all greenhouse gases produced by a typical two-adult, two-car household. By eliminating one car and taking public transportation instead of driving, a savings of up to 30% of carbon dioxide emissions can be realized.

Q: Can we expect federal funds to help pay for some of the expanded transit services?

A: Yes. The lack of local matching funds has inhibited the region's ability to attract additional federal funding for transit projects. The passage of the transit proposition in April 2010 would make more funds available to attract federal funding.

Q: What is Call-A-Ride?

A: This is a specific service offered to the disabled and senior population that utilizes vans with specialized equipment to assist riders in boarding and unboarding.

Q: Can we expect expanded public transit to lead to economic development?

A: It has been very common in corridors that have light rail or commuter rail to experience new development of housing, retail and other public services. In St. Louis County, there has been an estimated \$15 billion in new development that has occurred near MetroLink stations, with additional development slated for Richmond Heights, North Hanley and Central West End. St. Louis University economists estimate that every dollar invested in Metro transit operations returns \$6 to the local economy.

Q: Is transit ridership in St. Louis County growing?

A: Until the cuts imposed in March 2009, Metro transit ridership had increased 18% over a five year period.

Q: What happens if the public transit proposition is defeated?

A: Metro will be forced to make significant cuts in public transportation services, impacting thousands of transit riders, employers and those that rely on transit for their primary means of transportation.