



Rich Groves

The Possibility OF A STREETCAR EXTENSION INTO NORTH KANSAS CITY

Editorial by Richard P. Groves, Executive Director of the North Kansas City Business Council

Perhaps you have heard that a consulting firm has been hired to update the 2014 feasibility study about a possible streetcar extension into North Kansas City. This is an important step before starting the long process to find funding and to construct a streetcar extension. Before a final decision is made there are many questions we think should be asked and answered. See below.

If this stimulates other questions in your mind, please forward those thoughts to me at richard@nkcbusinesscouncil.com. We anticipate there will be opportunities for public input during the process of developing the feasibility study. We, the North Kansas City Business Council, will keep you informed of those opportunities and of major developments in the process.

1. What exact route will be recommended? Particularly, how will it cross the Missouri River? Also, which street through North Kansas City will it follow? Burlington or Swift?
2. Will service be free for rid-

ers like the current Kansas City streetcar service?

3. Who will likely be the users of the services of a streetcar line? What can we learn from the experiences of existing streetcar service in Kansas City?
4. How will the physical streetcar operation on that route impact daily life in North Kansas City? Automobiles, bicycles, scooters, pedestrians, buses, truck access to docks?
5. What will it cost?
6. How much federal funding will be available?
7. For the remaining cost, in what ways will funds be assembled for construction of the extended streetcar line and then for ongoing operation and maintenance?
8. Who will actually pay? What will be the impact on homeowners, businesses, commercial property owners and customers?
9. Will there be any consideration that the extension to North Kansas City is a first step for further extension to the north to allow a



A consulting firm is updating the the 2014 feasibility study about a possible streetcar extension into North Kansas City. Photo by Steph Rupp.

greater distribution of costs and revenue sources?

10. How will it impact property values in North Kansas City? Commercial property along the route? Other commercial property? Residential property?

11. If property values go up, how much will that impact commercial and residential property taxes?

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12. What will be the inflationary impact on rents and prices of services provided by businesses who will be required to pay higher property taxes?

13. Will it create more traffic IN to businesses in North Kansas City than it will enable traffic OUT of North Kansas City to other destinations further south on the streetcar line?

14. Will it provide pragmatic transportation (less costly, more convenient) to places of employment in North Kansas City or for residents of North Kansas City to other places?

15. To what extent would having streetcar service elevate North Kansas City in the eyes of others in the Kansas City metro area, creating a greater demand for living in North Kansas City, having a business in North Kansas City or being a customer of a business in North Kansas City?

16. How can people in North Kansas City who are not within convenient walking distance be able to take full advantage of streetcar service?

17. If a transportation taxing district is set up, what will be its boundaries and will it include a sales tax? How will that increased sales tax compare with surrounding communities? North Kansas City has benefitted in recent years because of a lower sales tax rate

than its neighboring communities.

18. Will increased lease costs passed along by commercial property owners result in an exit from North Kansas City of some of those businesses?

19. How will North Kansas City accommodate parking for those from north of North Kansas City who wish to use the streetcar to go to River Market, downtown KC, Crown Center, the Country Club Plaza and UMKC?

20. After construction, what costs will North Kansas City need to bear? From what source will revenue come to cover those costs?

21. Are there other alternatives for transportation that might be made using the same amount of funding (or less) that will likely be required for a streetcar extension? What about a fleet of electric shuttle vehicles that could enable all parts of North Kansas City to be served, not just along and near the streetcar line?

22. What is the long-term outlook for other technologies that might make streetcar service obsolete or excessively expensive to continue?

Consider the example of the "Electric Interurban Railway" that ran through North Kansas City from 1913 to 1933. It was an electric "light rail" system from downtown Kansas City across

the A.S.B. Bridge through North Kansas City and beyond to Liberty and Excelsior Springs to the northeast and to St. Joseph to the north. It was disabled and eventually removed because of the Great Depression and the improvement of other forms of transportation. A similar history occurred for the other lines of the interurban railroad extending south, east and west of downtown Kansas City.

A brief history of the Interurban line can be found at kchistory.org/image/interurban-railway. Here is an excerpt: "The line was in operation for 20 years in three counties north of the river. Two roadbeds were laid, one from Kansas City to Excelsior Springs, the other Kansas City to St. Joseph. The work was completed a year and four months after the start and on January 12, 1913, The Star carried a front-page story of the first day's run to Excelsior Springs. (The St. Joseph line was opened in May). Sixteen passenger cars, five freight cars and one service car comprised the rolling stock of the company. The company did well financially during most of its existence, but as the years progressed the automobile, busses, hard-surfaced roads and the depression all took their toll in customers. In May, 1933, the last trips were made, beginning the process of selling rights-of-way and removing bridges."

COMING EVENTS

FIRST FRIDAY COFFEE—FRIDAY, JANUARY 7

MONTHLY LUNCHEON—THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

Profile of a North Kansas City Leader

Julie Sola

It is inspiring to learn

about some of the leaders in our community.

Julie Sola, GM and Sr VP of the Harrah's Hotel and Casino in North Kansas City, is a great example.

Julie began her career as a 20-year-old cashier and rose through the ranks in a variety of roles – all at the same facility. Two years ago, she was promoted to the top job at this facility—the only female facility leader in the entire Caesars Entertainment (owner of Harrah's) organization.

Julie claims that her grandfather, who was also her pastor, and her parents were her mentors and role models. Her grandfather taught her at an early age to love all and be inclusive. She said her dad would give you the shirt off his back, take you in if you had nowhere to go and do anything to help others. Her mom taught her and her two brothers to have an attitude of gratitude for everything we have in life and said, "If you want something done, ask a busy person." Clearly this rubbed off on Julie.

In addition to her professional role as CEO/COO of the North Kansas City Harrah's she is a Board member and Treasurer of the North Kansas City Business Council, Board Chair of the Clay County Economic Development Council, Board Chair of the North Kansas City YMCA Missions Board, Board

member of the Northland Career Center and the Northland Regional Chamber and Vice-President of Fundraising for Park Hill's Southeast Elementary School PTA.

Julie and her husband Joe have been married ten years and have eight year old and five year old daughters. She readily admits she, "could not do what I do without the support of my husband, my family and my tribe. There is a lot of coordination that is involved with all of our schedules, but we make it work." Working in a 24/7 business allows her start and end times to be flexible. She says, "Being a part of my kids' lives is incredibly important, so I do my best to not miss the big things. I take them to school every day and I have found that the time

I spend with them in the morning is invaluable and so special."

She cites a personal goal to raise two daughters that believe they can do anything they set their minds to. Her professional goal is to be a servant leader to her team and her community.

One of her personal mottos is, "Listen to the whispers and you don't have to hear the screams." It has served her well with her career and her personal life.



Julie Sola, GM and Sr VP of the Harrah's Hotel and Casino in North Kansas City, (shown here with her husband, Joe, and their daughters) is the only female facility leader in the entire Caesars Entertainment organization.

WINNERS OF 2021 SPECIAL AWARDS

The North Kansas City Business Council recognized four businesses for special awards at the recent holiday event.

Community Service award *Kathy Warman*, the owner of K Warman Architecture + Design

Future Workforce award *Shawn Torrez*, Facility Manager at Arkema Chemical

Problem-Solving award *Randy Edge*, owner of InStore Design Display

Spirit of Giving award *Tina Weaver*, Executive Director of the North Kansas City YMCA



is similar to a Chamber of Commerce: a 501 c 6 non-profit corporation. But it is different. The difference is vitally important to understand for any leader of a North Kansas City business.

The North Kansas City Business Council is the **only** organization that is **totally focused** on the well-being of only the businesses in North Kansas City. It is the **only** organization that actively **listens**

to and talks with North Kansas City staff and City Council members on behalf of the business community on a regular basis. What the North Kansas City Business Council does can be summarized in three words: **Inform. Support. Connect.** It does its best for the businesses that have elected to invest in membership.

The three most common excuses for not becoming a member are: 1) "We are too busy; we don't have time to attend luncheons and other events." 2) "Most, if not all, of our customers are not

in North Kansas City and probably will never be." and 3) "We can't afford it."

First, the cost. For a small or new business, annual dues are less than a dollar a day: \$250. For an Established Business, annual dues are \$450. There are higher levels for businesses that wish to make a higher investment and attain higher visibility.

Investing in membership in the

REASONS TO INVEST IN MEMBERSHIP IN THE NORTH KANSAS CITY BUSINESS COUNCIL

North Kansas City Business Council is important for any business that owns or leases property or has employees who utilize the amenities of the City. These people have important reasons for being informed about what is happening and being supported for issues that are important to them. We can do more together than as individual businesses. The North Kansas City Business Council helps preserve or improve those things that are important to businesses and property owners.

As an example, in a separate article in this newsletter, you

may have noticed that we are beginning the process of providing much-needed information about a potential streetcar extension into North Kansas City. Most people seem to be very interested in that topic and want to be informed about it.

Some members say that the e-newsletter sent immediately after each City Council meeting which recaps business-related topics is worth the cost of mem-

bership, even if they never attend a Business Council event. Others value most the ability of the Business Council to help them make important connections with helpful people or support organizations they might not otherwise know about.

But, yes, there are events, too, which provide great networking opportunities: monthly luncheons, monthly First Friday Coffees, annual golf tournament the first Thursday in June and The Big Event Holiday Reception & Auction in early December.

A great New Years' resolution would be to act now to join the North Kansas City Business Council. Go to nkcbusiness-council.com and click on "Join" or "Become a Member."

Winter Wonderland Sponsored Christmas Trees

Please visit nkcbusinesscouncil.com to see pictures of many of the forty creatively decorated Christmas trees that adorned downtown North Kansas City along Armour and Swift during December, each one sponsored by a North Kansas City business as well as the names of the winning trees.

Are You Ready to Transform Your Business from “Doing OK” to Becoming a DESTINATION?

A “destination” business isn’t limited to customers within a small geographic region. People will travel from far away for a destination business that has unique appeal. Internet traffic, too, will rise when searchers discover something unique and special about a destination business. When your business becomes a destination sales and profit can exceed what you originally considered possible.

What kind of businesses can be a destination business? Any type of business that pursues customers...whether for services provided, physical products or a value-added experience.

How can you make your business become a destination? By implementing the practices shared in the Jon Schallert Destination Creation course.

The next opportunity to participate in a Destination Creation course is during six 2-hour sessions in January and February 2022 sponsored by the North Kansas City Business Council. Attendance can either

be in-person in North Kansas City or by Zoom. The course will be facilitated by Rich Groves, Executive Director of the North Kansas City Business Council, a certified facilitator for Jon Schallert’s course. The fast-moving, participant-engaging course utilizes 19 Jon Schallert webinars and interviews by Jon Schallert, renowned for two decades for his “Destination Bootcamps” and his inspiring speaking engagements around the U.S. and Canada.

Details are as follows: Six 2-hour sessions, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. on Mondays, January 17, 24 and 31 and February 14, 21 and 28 or 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Tuesdays, January 11, 18 and 25 and February 8, 15 and 22. \$399 registration fee, 20% discount (\$319) for members of the North Kansas City Business Council. The number of in-person participants is limited. Please contact Rich Groves immediately if you are interested. 816-472-7700 or richard@nkcbusiness-council.com

NKC UNITED PROJECT

The City Council of North Kansas City in 2021 formed an Equity and Inclusion Committee of resident volunteers “to promote an inclusive community where all feel welcomed.” Here are the principles espoused by that committee as they relate to the business community:

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for customers, clients, visitors, vendors and employees regardless of their race, ethnic origin, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age or income.
- Do not engage in discrimination based on any of the above classifications.
- Encourage diversity as a part of business practices including hiring, training and marketing.

- Empower and support employees and team members through open communication within the business organization.



- Actively engage diverse groups and consider cultural perspectives when it comes to problem-solving and developing opportunities.

It is self-evident to most business leaders that these are good principles and “good business” which are seen in practice in most, if not all, North Kansas City businesses.

If you have positive experiences to share or have other comments you would like to share with the Equity and Inclusion Committee, here is an email address you can use: eic@nkc.org

NORTH KANSAS CITY BUSINESS COUNCIL

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RECENT NEW MEMBERS

Axis Construction Group

Church of the Good Shepherd
(Brew Church KC meeting in the RINO)

Cardinal Crest
(residential and commercial construction)

Defense Logistics, LLC

Elite Roofing Supply

Paradise Productions KC, LLC

Plant Lyfe Oasis

Pure Design, LLC

Vanguard Business Solutions