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## Section 1: Introduction

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In 2001, the City of Manhattan completed a transit implementation plan. The implementation plan grew out of the City's long range transportation plan called the *Manhattan Area Transportation Strategy: Connecting to 2020 (MATS)* which explored the feasibility of starting a transit system. The implementation plan was intended to serve as blueprint to start the operation of the service.

Since 2001, interest in transit has continued to grow. The City through funding from the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) undertook this update to the original plan. The study was overseen by an advisory committee comprised of a cross section of the region and included representatives from Kansas State University (KSU), the City of Manhattan, Fort Riley, KDOT and the Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (ATA Bus or ATA).

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|-------------------------|---|
| • Dick Hayter (Chair)   | Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce                      |
| • Amy Schultz           | Kansas State University - Student Governing Association |
| • Lisa Koch, AICP       | Kansas Department of Transportation                     |
| • Joan Brabec           | Twin Valley Developmental Services, Inc.                |
| • Laura Morris          | Fort Riley  |
| • Craig Phillips        | Fort Riley  |
| • Jayme Morris Hardeman | Manhattan City Commission                               |
| • Darwin Abbott         | Kansas State University Parking Services                |
| • Anne Smith            | Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency <sup>2</sup>     |
| • Monty Wedel           | Riley County  |
| • John Keller           | Kansas State University Faculty Senate                  |
| • Bruce Shubert         | Kansas State University                                 |

In addition, these City of Manhattan staff helped facilitate the committee meetings as well as provide guidance to the consulting team:

- Lauren Palmer, Assistant City Manager
- Karen Davis, Director of Community Development
- Savannah Benedick, Intern

### 1.1 The Study Area: About the City of Manhattan and the Flint Hills Region

The study area consists of Geary, Pottawatomie and Riley counties. The City of Manhattan is located in Riley County, Kansas and, in 2000, had nearly 50,000 residents and is the largest city in the area. Manhattan is home to Kansas State University and its 20,000 students. Near Manhattan is Fort Riley, a major post for the U.S. Army. Together with Junction City in Geary County and Wamego in Pottawatomie County, these cities comprise the central population centers for the Flint Hills region. See Figure 1 on the next page.

### 1.2 2001 Plan

The 2001 plan called for a three-route public transit system to operate in the City of Manhattan. Two routes were to operate citywide with the third route operating exclusively on the KSU campus. This third route, then tentatively called the Bramlage Park and Ride Shuttle, would be operated by the city but paid entirely by the parking division of

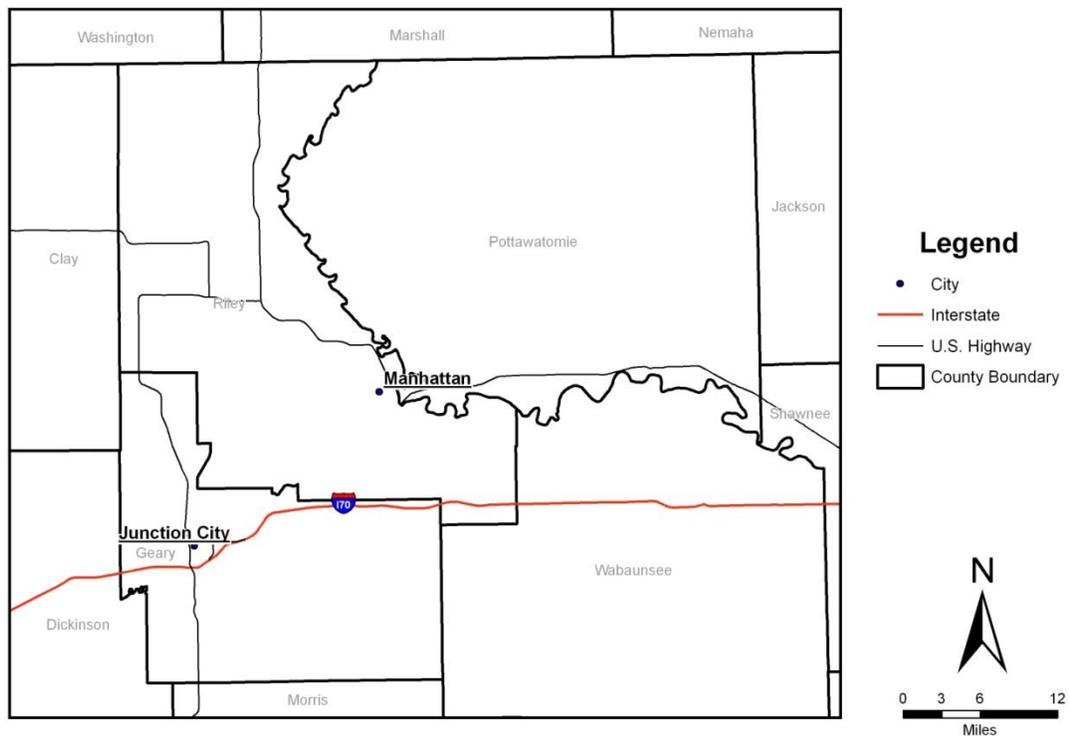
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<sup>2</sup> This agency was formerly known as the Riley County Area Transportation Agency.

Kansas State University. The transit system would operate seven days per week, with varied frequencies and beginning and ending times, and it would be consistent with expected demand for service.

In addition, a weekly service called the *Aggieville Special* would operate during the school year on Friday and Saturday nights. This would be a “flexible route” service and operate from about 10:00 PM to 2:00 AM.

Figure 1: Study Area—Geary, Pottawatomie, and Riley Counties



The plan had three basic parts:

- System Management
- System Marketing
- Funding, System Start up and Operating Plans

### System Management

This section reviewed management options for a transit system. These options included:

1. Operating the service as a city department with city employees,
2. A private firm under contract to the city, or
3. Use of a private management firm to manage city employees.

Option 2, using a private firm, was recommended.

### System Marketing

This section outlined marketing strategies and tactics to be used for starting a new transit system. Some of the actions included:

- Establishing a system identity
- Development of public information pieces such a system map with public timetables
- Web site
- Distribution of information to locations with a high potential for ridership such as the Manhattan Mall, KSU, and apartment complexes

### Funding, System Start up and Operating Plans

The plan included information regarding system funding, system start up, and an operating plan:

- System funding including a first year operating budget as well as an initial capital budget. It was anticipated that the system would be mainly funded with a combination of federal, state, city, and K-State parking and student fees. The first year system cost (including system oversight by the city as well as amortization of capital expenditures) was just over \$1.4 million.
- Start-Up Check List, which anticipated that it would take 11 months to actually start the system once all funding was secured and committed to the service.
- Detailed Operating Plan including schedules, route descriptions, vehicles and facilities.
  - Operating plan called for thirty-minute frequencies on the two citywide routes; every ten to twenty minutes on the Bramlage Park and Ride shuttle, and hourly for the Aggieville Special
  - A heavy duty 40- to 45-passenger bus was recommended for the citywide, Aggieville, and Bramlage services. Such a vehicle has a useful life of about 10 years and would use diesel fuel, be wheelchair lift equipped and have two wheelchair tie-down positions.
  - Suggested locations for passenger shelters and information kiosks were presented.

The full implementation plan can be found on the City of Manhattan's web site at:

<http://www.ci.manhattan.ks.us/index.aspx?nid=726>

### **1.3 ATA Bus Plan**

The Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency (ATA Bus) is a private, non-profit entity that provides transportation service to the general public, elderly and disabled populations within Riley County. In 2009, ATA Bus prepared a service and funding proposal based on the 2001 transit implementation plan developed for the City of Manhattan. This proposal is included in Appendix D and is later analyzed in this report.

The impetus for ATA to implement the 2001 plan is to gain increased efficiency of its operation, which has seen significant ridership increases over the last two to three years. Currently, ATA provides demand-response service within Riley County with most trips starting and ending in Manhattan. By converting to a fixed-route system, ATA believes it can provide services more efficiently.

The heart of the plan is a financial description of the services to be provided as well as rationale for key budgeted items. The ATA plan calls for partial implementation of the 2001 Plan, namely:

- The two-route citywide system from the 2001 Plan. ATA Bus would implement weekday (Monday through Friday) service only.
- The ATA plan would not implement weekend service from the 2001 plan.
- The ATA plan would also not implement the KSU shuttle or the Aggieville Special.
- The weekday service would operate 30-minute frequencies from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM followed by hourly service until 10:00 PM.

ATA proposed to begin operation of the plan in the fourth quarter of 2010. ATA would run its current, demand-response service until then. ATA also assumes its current demand-response service would continue after the implementation of the fixed route system. While shifting of riders from the demand-response service to the fixed route service is expected, ATA has not been able to quantify this shift.

#### **1.4 Plan Update Objectives**

With the increased interest in transit, this update is intended to define the short- and long-term feasibility for transit in Manhattan and the growing interest in the surrounding area by:

- Reviewing the transit needs of key markets including Kansas State University students and faculty, and residents of Fort Riley, Manhattan, and rural areas
- Identifying the building blocks for a future transit system
- Reviewing current and future resources available to support transit
- Developing a street ready plan, should a transit system be deemed feasible