Appendix H – Transit Development Plan Recommendations

The recommendations were developed through TDP committee meetings and City Utility meetings.

To Be Completed within the Next Year

1. City Utilities Transit, in partnership with the Ozarks Transportation Organization, should prepare a strategic plan for the creation of a stand-alone regional transit authority. The issue of whether a stand-alone organization should be created must be approved by voter referendum. The earliest such a vote could take place would be in August 2008. The August 2008 referendum in Greene County is intended to solicit public approval for a variety of transportation projects and including the transit authority question on this referendum is the preferred timing of such a request, though the strategic plan should consider other dates as well. The strategic plan should include service expansion plans into outlying jurisdictions, modifications to routes in the existing service area, as well as a program for soliciting public support at the ballot box.

2. City Utilities Transit should begin a fare increase process in line with its fiscal year calendar. The target for farebox recovery ratio should be 20 percent and would necessitate that one-way fares be increased to $1.00 in FY2008 and $1.25 in FY2009 just to maintain existing service. Any service increase would likely require a one-way fare increase to $1.50.

3. City Utilities Transit, with the Ozarks Transportation Organization, should review current service standards and develop a comprehensive set of service standards. Included in this review should be consideration of how trips are defined, how timeliness is reported, and how data collection techniques can be improved. In FY2008, the Federal Transit Administration will require that all transit agencies conduct a full year data collection effort to capture data specific to the National Transit Database. These efforts will facilitate this data collection as well.

4. Based on passenger input, riders are in need of additional service during evening hours and on weekends. City Utilities Transit, in association with its own Fixed Route Advisory Committee and the Ozarks Transportation Organization, should prioritize whether evening service or weekend service is the higher priority and make plans to increase service in the priority area selected. City Utilities Transit and

the Ozarks Transportation Organization should then determine what fare increase would be necessary to maintain the targeted farebox recovery ratio.

5. City Utilities Transit should rework and simplify its fare structure as it currently offers regular fare, daily fare with unlimited rides, 7-day pass with unlimited rides, 30-ride passes, 60-ride passes, 31-day passes with unlimited rides and an annual pass with unlimited rides. The fare charged is dependent on whether the person is considered an adult, youth, elderly, disabled, is on a field trip, or a child under five. There is also a special semester pass for full-time college students.

6. City Utilities Transit should complete a comprehensive review of its bus stop locations and determine if stops could be consolidated, what stops could be relocated, and what stops could be removed. If grid system service is implemented, the existing bus turn-out stop locations could be augmented with a flag stop policy. Data collected during the FTA mandated collection effort in FY2008 could be expanded to include data for each bus stop.

7. City Utilities Transit should aggressively pursue the continuation of its bus turn-out program with the City of Springfield. As part of this program, all existing and future turn-outs should have striped pavement markings and be appropriately signed.

To Be Completed within the Next Three Years

1. City Utilities Transit and the Fixed-Route Advisory Committee should determine ways in which the second priority for service expansion (either night or weekend service) could be enhanced and develop a program for instituting this expansion. As the service is expanded, City Utilities Transit and the Ozarks Transportation Organization should then determine what fare increase would be necessary to maintain the targeted farebox recovery ratio.

2. City Utilities Transit should consider a change in the basic route structure it currently uses within the City of Springfield. Because of the effective grid roadway network completed within the City, the transit system should take advantage of such a network and implement a grid based system. This would also relieve some of the pressure on the transfer facility as transfers could occur at key intersection within the grid.

3. City Utilities Transit should approach Missouri State University, Drury University, Ozarks Technical College, Evangel University, Baptist Bible College, and Central Bible College to discuss including a surcharge in each student's student activity fee that would then be distributed to City Utilities Transit in exchange for unlimited free rides on the CU Transit network. Such a charge ranges from $10.00 to $25.00 per semester. According to national research, only about 20 percent of the student population become regular users of the

system with another 25-30 percent using it occasionally. Because only 20-50 percent of the students would use the system, the remaining student activity fees collected would subsidize those students who do use the system.

4. In response to issues raised in the on-board survey, City Utilities Transit should invest in an automated voice annunciation system that would be used to announce all stop locations during a transit trip. This technology would remove the responsibility of announcing current and next stop information from the bus drivers and allow for recorded voice announcements that are clearly audible and configured to coincide with each stop.

5. The existing transfer facility has become outdated. City Utilities, in cooperation with the City of Springfield, should determine if the relocation of the transfer facility from McDaniel Street to Water Street is a joint development project or a stand-alone City Utilities project. The new transfer facility should include customer amenities such as climate-controlled waiting areas with benches, restroom facilities, and a fare media purchase office. The facility should also be designed so that future expansion and new transit technologies can be accommodated.

To Be Completed within the Next Five Years

1. To assist in on-time performance and to provide customers with real-time travel information, City Utilities Transit should invest in Automated Vehicle Locater (AVL) Technology so that the exact location of busses is known at all times. This information could then be linked to variable message signs and/or monitors at the transfer facility so that customers were aware of their projected wait time. The technology would also be useful for CU dispatchers in tracking service levels and for planning purposes in run cutting and routing.

2. As the regional vanpool program being developed by the Ozarks Transportation Organization grows, City Utilities Transit should take over management and operations of the program. Under Federal law, vanpool mileage can be counted as part of a transit agency's National Transit Database operating statistics if the program is managed and operated by the transit agency. There are over 50 transit agencies nationwide that take advantage of this opportunity. The vanpool operation is financially self-sustaining (in fact it creates an operating surplus) and any additional funds that accrue as a result of the program can be used on fixed-route, paratransit or vanpool operations. Working with Transportation Demand Management experts at the Ozarks Transportation Organization, a plan for a vanpool program managed and operated by City Utilities is the first step in CU taking over the vanpool operations.

3. While the Springfield Metropolitan area does not have a sufficient population size or density to support any type of fixed-rail service, City Utilities Transit should explore opportunities for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) to and from the Central Business District. Bus Rapid Transit can be as minimal as specially designed buses operating with limited stops along existing corridors with signal preemption technology to

the development of a network of transit only roadways that connect outlying communities to the center city. The current Ozarks Transportation Organization Long-Range Transportation Plan and Congestion Management System program specify BRT as one option that must be considered prior to roadway expansion.

4. There are numerous new technologies that may have applications for City Utilities Transit as it grows over the next five years. These technologies include but are not limited to:

    - Automated bus stop fare collection devices
    - Signal preemption devices
    - Swipe card technology
    - Specialized fare media

City Utilities Transit staff should continue to monitor advances in transit technology and determine if investment in such technologies is warranted.