



Introduction



From its earliest days as a small settlement along the banks of the Missouri River, Kansas City's fortunes have been tied to transportation. River navigation followed by railroads, interstate highways, and an international airport have all shaped the metropolitan area. Transportation has influenced the local economy, the pattern of development in the region, and the general quality of life. The plans we make today for our transportation systems will certainly impact our future community. It is with the recognition of both this great challenge and great opportunity that the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) has developed *Transportation Outlook 2030 Update*, the region's long-range transportation plan.

1.1 Overview of the LRTP

Transportation Outlook 2030 Update describes how the region will manage, operate and invest in its multimodal transportation system over the next three decades. The plan describes goals and objectives for the region, policies to help the region make progress toward the goals, and actions to support the policies, including implementation of specific transportation investments. The plan views transportation in terms of the movement of people and goods, not just vehicles. While the plan is divided into sections corresponding to specific transportation modes (e.g., highways, public transportation, bicycles), it stresses the interrelationships between these modes and promotes the integration of the individual facilities and services into a system that efficiently and cost-effectively meets the access and mobility needs of the region.

1.2 History of Transportation Plans for the Region

Transportation planning in the Kansas City region is a dynamic process. In a sense, transportation plans are always a work in progress, rather than a finished product. Studies are continuously being started and completed that may result in substantial changes to the plan. Nonetheless, since World War II, a series of eight discreet regional transportation plans have shaped the transportation system we see in place today.

- 1945 – *Local Transportation* – Published just before the construction of the region's first limited-access highways, this plan provided an early indication of the concepts behind the design of the initial freeway and expressway network. The plan devoted equal attention to streets/highways and transit, and discussed the need to achieve a proper balance between the two.

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- 1951 – *Expressways, Greater Kansas City* – Published at a time when the region was facing a rapid increase in post-war traffic and congestion, this plan actively promoted major highway improvements, ensuring that the region would take major steps in reshaping its transportation system to accommodate automobile traffic. Transit was not addressed in this plan, except to note that transit services would be improved by adding express bus service on the planned expressways.
- 1959 – *Kansas City Metropolitan Area Transportation Study* – Comparable to traffic studies being conducted in large cities across the country at the time, this plan incorporated the interstate highway corridors that had been designated since the previous plan. Like the 1951 plan, this plan placed little emphasis on transit, focusing more on new freeways. Traffic estimates prepared for this plan resulted in recommendations to add beltway freeways to relieve future congestion around the downtown loop and on major bridges across the Kansas and Missouri Rivers.
- 1972 – *Freeway and Expressway Plan* – Published at a time the region was seeing rapid growth, mostly suburban in nature, this plan proposed additional beltway freeways to serve a forecasted 1990 population of 2.5 million persons (actual 1990 population was just over 1.5 million persons). Although primarily a plan for major highways, the plan did propose an exclusive bus freeway between downtown Kansas City, Mo., and the Kansas City International Airport. The plan articulated a broad series of regional goals including encouraging interrelationships between different modes of transportation.
- 1975 – *Long-Range Transit Plan*
- 1977 – *Framework for Development*
- 1978 – *Long-Range Street and Highway Plan* – Prepared as three interrelated elements, these plans together comprised the long-range regional transportation plan. The transit plan called for a four-fold increase in bus service to eventually put 75 percent of the area’s population within walking distance of public transit. It also called for the development of 24 miles of exclusive bus lanes with an option to convert them to fixed guideway as ridership increased (this element was amended in 1980 to recommend light rail transit in the Southtown corridor). The land-use plan anticipated growth spreading out from the central core, with most land being used for low-density residential use. Some medium- and high-density development was anticipated along major highway corridors and in activity centers near the intersections of major highways. The street and highway plan sought to serve transportation needs of existing and anticipated development by synchronizing road projects with land development and by integrating roadway and transit projects, with attention to costs and energy consumption in light of the inflation pressures and energy shortages facing the nation during that time.
- 1990 – *Year 2010 Interim Street and Highway Plan* – Initiated as an update to the 1978 *Long-Range Street and Highway Plan*, the plan was ultimately approved as an interim plan due to a range of community concerns regarding environmental impacts, lack of transportation alternatives, and population and employment projections for the region’s core. A series of follow-up activities were conducted in response to the concerns. These activities included: updating demographic forecasts to reflect policies

that encouraged redevelopment and reinvestment in the central core of the region; completion of an update to the transit element of the long-range transportation plan, a reaffirmation of support for light rail transit in the Southtown corridor; and continued assessment of transportation implications for air quality, including global warming.

- 1995 – *Transportation 2020* – Prepared in response to the landmark Intermodal Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, this plan was the region’s first intermodal and multimodal long-range transportation plan, including elements on streets and highways, public transportation, bicycles, pedestrians, goods movement and transportation management. The plan was based on a policy (versus trend) forecast of economic and demographic growth and was developed around a policy framework that emphasized: 1) *system preservation* in response to concerns about deferred maintenance; 2) personal mobility and quality of life in response to concerns about overreliance on the automobile and resulting air quality problems; 3) cooperative planning to encourage more local government collaboration and citizen involvement; 4) funding to ensure the plan was financially realistic; 5) land use and development in response to concerns about urban form and land-use development patterns; 6) regional economy to support continued growth and prosperity; 7) safety to promote improved safety and security for users of the transportation system; and 8) system management and efficiency in an effort to get the most out of existing transportation assets. The plan recommended construction of light rail transit in the Southtown corridor, further study of a proposed outer belt freeway, further study of commuter rail, and completion of plans for new bike facilities on both sides of the state line. This was the first plan prepared subsequent to the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and the first for which an air quality conformity determination was made.
- 1999 – *Transportation 2020 (Update)* – Prepared as the triennial update to the 1995 plan, this update reaffirmed the policy framework of the earlier plan, and included additional project detail to reflect studies completed since 1995. Recommendations included improving selected perimeter arterial streets rather than building a new outer belt freeway, building light rail in the Southtown corridor and commuter rail in the I-35 corridor between Kansas City and Olathe, doubling bus transit service and reconfiguring it around local and regional transit centers, implementing the Kansas City Scout freeway management system, implementing 1,300 miles of bike facilities, and completing plans to implement an international trade processing center.
- 2002 – *Transportation Outlook 2030* – Building on the foundation of previous transportation plans, *Transportation Outlook 2030* documented the continued sprawl, aging, and population and employment growth of the region. The policy direction, reiterated in this Update, emphasizes four areas: 1) increase emphasis on maintaining transportation infrastructure; 2) increase modal choice; 3) better integrate projects into the community; and 4) better manage roadway capacity.

This triennial *Transportation Outlook 2030 Update* readopted the policies and goals of the 2002 publication of the plan. The most recent population and employment forecasts were used to update the assumptions made in 2002. Unlike the 2002 plan, MARC did not issue a call for new transportation projects. However all existing projects were updated with current information. Additionally, *Transportation Outlook 2030* included an action plan at

the closing of each chapter. The Update evaluates the progress made in these action plans since 2002. The status of the action plans is detailed in a table at the end of every chapter. And for the first time, a Safety Element has been added to the plan because of its increased significance in MARC's transportation goals.

1.3 LRTP Planning Process

Transportation Outlook 2030 Update is a product of the “continuing, cooperative and comprehensive” transportation planning process established through federal transportation legislation. MARC, as the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO), is responsible for conducting the planning process in cooperation with state and local governments. The planning process ultimately directs the expenditure of federal funds for specific transportation projects. Appendix A contains a full description of the planning process followed to develop *Transportation Outlook 2030 Update*.

Three analyses of the plan have been conducted to ensure that the plan meets federal fiscal, social equity and environmental requirements. These include the Financial Capacity Analysis (Appendix B), the Environmental Justice Analysis (Appendix C), and the Air Quality Conformity Analysis (Appendix D). In addition, the plan was assessed to ensure that it considered the federal metropolitan planning factors (Appendix E).

Finally, *Transportation Outlook 2030 Update* builds on the extensive public involvement process of *Transportation Outlook 2030* that spanned 15 months in 2001 and 2002 and resulted in contacts with over 2,700 individuals across the region. Appendix F contains a full description of the public involvement activities conducted as part of the update process.