Existing Conditions

This chapter will establish who the target populations for enhanced mobility services are, where they live, where they want to go, and the current options for getting to those destinations. It will also briefly address existing funding frameworks.

The Kansas City Region

The Kansas City region is located at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers. The region is unique in that it encompasses portions of two states, Missouri and Kansas, and contains a variety of development typologies ranging from very dense urban centers, to farmland and small towns. There is one Large Urban Area in the region, encompassing urban and suburban Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas. Since 2000, Lee’s Summit, Missouri has been the region’s sole Small Urban Area.

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) is the designated recipient of 5310 funds apportioned to the Kansas City Urbanized Area under MAP-21. Other neighboring recipients include Lee’s Summit and St. Joseph, Missouri, which, as Small Urbanized Areas, apply for 5310 funds through the State of Missouri. While the competitive selection processes for 5310 funds in these areas do not overlap, many services awarded 5310 funds in these areas do.

As the region’s Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) serves 119 communities in nine-county region, including Platte, Clay, Ray, Jackson, and Cass Counties in Missouri; and Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson, and Miami Counties in Kansas.
Funding
FTA Section 5310
The most significant funding strategy available for enhanced mobility providers is Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 funding: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. This program provides federal match funding for public transportation projects planned, designed and carried out to meet the special needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable.

MARC operates under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with KCATA to undertake the competitive selection process for the region’s 5310 funds, provide staffing services for the Mobility Advisory Committee, which programs those funds, and maintain the region’s Coordinated Plan. This document represents that Coordinated Plan for the region, and, among other things, is meant to guide the programming of FTA Section 5310 funds for the Kansas City Urbanized Area.

Other Funding Availability
While the FTA Section 5310 program is the most robust funding opportunity for enhanced mobility services provided by the federal government, it is not the only opportunity to fund enhanced mobility services. And as the aging population grows, demand for enhanced mobility services is expected to grow, further tightening funding for those services.

User-side funding:
Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is an eligible expense for low-income beneficiaries of Medicaid, and state Medicaid programs must assure that Medicaid beneficiaries have transportation access to all medically necessary services. Separate from emergency ambulance service, NEMT entails transportation to and from doctors’ appointments, dialysis, chemotherapy, etc. Medicare can also be used for medical transportation, but only in the case of emergency, or if the user otherwise requires ambulance transportation.

Title III-B of the Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding for transportation services as well. These funds, distributed to state agencies, have many uses, including case management and home assistance services in addition to transportation.

The Department of Veterans Affairs provides NEMT services for low-income and disabled veterans.

Provider-side funding:
Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA), the Community-Based Care Transitions Program, Community-Based Collaborative Care Network Program, and Balancing Incentive Payments Program, provide funds to community-based organizations together with hospitals to reduce readmission rates, improve the transition process for patients, and facilitate aging in place, respectively. Providing transportation is an eligible expense under these programs.

In Missouri, Senate Bill 40 organizations may be organized on a county-by-county level by a levy to create sheltered workshops, residential facilities, or related services for the care or employment of
handicapped persons. These funds may be used in part to fund transportation services for these populations.

**Demographics**

**Individuals with Disabilities**

According to the 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, roughly 12 percent of the area’s 1.9 million people over the age of five in MARC’s nine-county service area reported having at least one disability. Of those, 37 percent were over the age of 65.

By far, the most prevalent disabilities in the Kansas City region are ambulatory disabilities, especially among groups 35 years and older. Cognitive disabilities are the most prevalent for younger age groups. In either case, transportation is likely to be a challenge for these groups. Of particular note is that the 35 to 64 year age group has significantly higher incidences of ambulatory disabilities than older cohorts, and as that group ages into the 65 years and older age groups, it will potentially stress the existing service infrastructure.

**Older Adults**

Thirteen percent of the region is currently 65 years of age or older. The share of the regional population aged 65 years and older is expected to grow substantially over the next 15 years, as 20 percent of the region’s population, currently aged 50-64 years old, is expected to age into that group during that time. The largest growth is expected in Platte County, MO (7.8%), and Wyandotte and Johnson Counties in Kansas (6.8%).
Veterans

In the Kansas City region, 9 percent of the 18-and-older population are veterans. Nineteen percent of that population has a disability, and 5 percent are below the poverty line. Of those veterans that are below the poverty line, 74 percent also have a disability. Inversely, 19 percent of disabled veterans are below the poverty line.
Low-Income Households

Transportation is also a challenge for households with low-incomes, and households without access to personal vehicles for transportation. Twelve percent of the region’s households reported income below the federal poverty line, and 28 percent reported income below twice the federal poverty level. Wyandotte County has the highest concentration of poverty in the region, with 22 percent of households below the federal poverty level, and 49 percent below twice the federal level. Ray, Jackson and Wyandotte Counties all have higher populations with incomes below the poverty line than the regional average.

Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months

[Bar chart showing the ratio of income to poverty level for different counties, with Johnson County having a significantly higher ratio compared to other counties, indicating a higher poverty level.]

[Legends: Under .50, .50 to .99, 1.00 to 1.24, 1.25 to 1.49, 1.50 to 1.84, 1.85 to 1.99, 2.00 and over]
Vehicle ownership also effects a household’s transportation options. Households with no vehicles available rely on other modes of transportation to get around, which can restrict employment options and make day-to-day life more difficult, especially for households with older adults or individuals with disabilities. Six percent of the region’s households are without a vehicle available, with higher concentrations in Ray, Jackson, and Wyandotte counties. These are the same counties with higher-than-average instances of poverty. Households in more rural counties (e.g. Cass, Ray and Miami) are more likely to report owning more than one car.

**Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations**

Analysis was conducted for each census tract in the Kansas City region with service-dependent populations (older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income populations and veterans), and data was normalized for each category as a proportion of the total population in each census tract. Quartiles for each demographic category were calculated regionally, and each census tract was scored based on which quartile its score fell in. Census tracts with higher scores represent the presence of transit-dependent populations in proportionally higher shares than other parts of the region.

For example, a census tract with the highest demographic score is likely to have older adults, individuals with disabilities, low-income populations, and veterans, all in the top quartile for the region. Conversely, a census tract with the lowest demographic score will have representation from those populations in the lowest quartiles for the region.

Urban centers and rural areas at the metropolitan edge tended to have the highest concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged populations, presenting challenges for providing adequate, scalable levels of service across the region.
Destinations

After understanding where target populations reside, it is important to understand where they want or need to go. Based on results from the public survey, regional hospitals, clinics, dialysis centers, senior centers, the Truman Sports Complex, the KCI Airport, and the Plaza shopping center were mapped. In the region, 73 percent of colleges, 62 percent of senior centers, and 77 percent of hospitals and other healthcare facilities are accessible by transit. Accessibility is defined in this case as being within a quarter-mile of a transit stop. Additionally, the Plaza, KCI Airport, and the Truman Sports Complex are all accessible by transit services as well.

Time-of-day and day-of-week barriers for transportation services make some of these destinations more difficult to access, but in general, fixed-route transit services provide coverage for a majority of these destinations. As on-demand services expand throughout the region, these gaps will continue to shrink.
Fixed route Transit
The region’s transit system is a network of services provided by five area transit agencies: the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Johnson County Transit, Unified Government Transit, City of Independence Transit and the Kansas City Streetcar Authority. In the last two years, elements of Johnson County Transit, Unified Government Transit, and Independence Transit have been taken over by the KCATA to increase regional coordination, build economies of scale, and provide better service for end-users.

The KCATA and its partners currently operate 87 bus routes throughout the region, including six fast-and-frequent routes, fifteen 30-minute routes, nine express routes, and fifteen locally-operated routes. In accordance with ADA regulations, all of these routes are coupled with complementary paratransit service for qualified residents within three-quarters of a mile of a transit route, excluding commuter services.
Nearly all of the census tracts within the urban core with high concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged populations have fixed-route transit coverage of some variety. However, beyond the I-435 / I-470 / Mo-291 loop, transit access is mostly non-existent, with the exception of southwestern Johnson County. Due to the nature of these areas, traditional fixed-route transit may or may not be the most appropriate transportation solution.

Service Times
Limitations on the time and day of service for fixed-route transit in the Kansas City region affects the mobility independence of transportation-disadvantaged populations. ADA paratransit services are only required to operate at the same times as fixed-route transit services, and so services that end early, start late, or operate only on weekdays can restrict the transportation disadvantaged from travelling at-will.

Additionally, restrictions on booking trips can affect mobility independence as well. Twelve enhanced mobility services in the Kansas City region require trip scheduling at least 24-hours in advance. This is a commonly cited complaint by service users. However, with RideKC Freedom On-Demand and other on-demand options growing throughout the region, trips may be scheduled on the same day, with as little as 45 minutes notice, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. These developments greatly increase accessibility for transportation-disadvantaged populations.

Peak-hour transit service
Nearly all routes in the regional transit network offer service during peak travel times. Peak hours, commonly known as rush hours, are the times of day where traffic volumes are at their highest, which usually occur twice each weekday and correspond with travel to and from work.

Nine transit routes only provide service during peak hours, catering primarily to work trips. Most of these routes are express routes that carry riders from suburban locations into the central business district with few stops in between.

**Midday transit service**

Midday transit service primarily provides service between peak travel times. The majority of service falls in the 31–60 minute frequency range and is concentrated in Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas City, Kansas, and areas just north of the Missouri River. Higher frequency service, including both the 10–20 and the 21–30 minute ranges, are concentrated in the urban core of Kansas City, Missouri, and are fewer in number. By nature of frequency, these services are more convenient for riders and afford more local trips for a multitude of purposes.

The most frequent transit network – routes with 20-minute service or less during midday – include the following routes:

- Main Street Metro Area Express (MAX)
- Troost Avenue Metro Area Express (MAX)
- The Kansas City Streetcar
- Prospect Avenue
- Independence Avenue
- 31st Street
- 39th Street

**Daily service**

Of all routes in the current transit system, only 25 provide service seven days per week, and 39 provide Saturday service in addition to weekday travel. This is a significant limitation, especially for using transit to access employment in suburban areas or for jobs that do not have traditional Monday-through-Friday shifts.

**Nighttime service**

The current network of nighttime transit service is also limited. Night transit service includes routes that operate after the last peak travel period ends, usually around 7 p.m. Thirty-five routes currently provide service after 7pm. There are additionally nine routes that provide service after midnight.

**Free and Reduced Fare Programs:**

On Veterans Day, 2017, the KCATA announced a free fare program for all veterans in the Kansas City utilizing fixed-route transit services. This program aims to eliminate the cost barrier to transportation, and to empower area veterans to seek and maintain employment, as well as living their day-to-day lives.

Transit users who are qualified for ADA paratransit service are also able to use any fixed-route transit service for free as well. Additionally, students at four colleges and universities in the area also receive transit passes through student fees.

The KCATA continues to investigate other free or reduced fare programs, including those for older adults.
ADA and ADA-Complementary Paratransit Services:

Below is a list of transit agency-sponsored ADA complementary and non-ADA paratransit services in the Kansas City region, their eligibility requirements, service areas and operating characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERVICE NAME</th>
<th>ELIGIBLE USERS</th>
<th>SERVICE AREA</th>
<th>OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RideKC Freedom (Formerly Share-a-Fare)</td>
<td>Must be approved through eligibility process. Criteria is specific to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).</td>
<td>ADA Paratransit – Operated within ¼ miles of local bus routes.</td>
<td>Operating hours are the same as the hours of operation of fixed route adjacent to the trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Must meet one of the following criteria:</td>
<td>Non-ADA Paratransit – Service is provided anywhere within Kansas City, Missouri, city limits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Age 16-65, with a disability.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Age 65 or older with an annual income of no more than 150% of the U.S. poverty level.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Government Transit Dial-A-Ride</td>
<td>Must be approved through eligibility process. Criteria is specific to ADA.</td>
<td>ADA Paratransit – Operated within ¼ miles of local bus routes.</td>
<td>Operating hours are the same as the hours of operation of fixed route adjacent to the trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Independence IndeAccess</td>
<td>Must be approved through eligibility process. Criteria is specific to ADA.</td>
<td>ADA Paratransit – Operated within ¼ miles of local bus routes.</td>
<td>Operating hours are the same as the hours of operation as the fixed route adjacent to the trip.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Independence IndeAccess+</td>
<td>Must be approved through eligibility process.</td>
<td>Covers all of the city of Independence.</td>
<td>Operating hours are the same as the rest of the City of Independence transit system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE NAME</td>
<td>ELIGIBLE USERS</td>
<td>SERVICE AREA</td>
<td>OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson County Special Edition</td>
<td>Must be approved through eligibility process and meet one of the following criteria: 1. Age 65 or older. 2. Have a documented disability. 3. Have a monthly family income within low-income guidelines.</td>
<td>One leg of the trip must be in Johnson County, but the other leg can be in Kansas City, Kansas, or Kansas City, Missouri.</td>
<td>Operating hours are Monday through Friday, 6 a.m.-6 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson County SWIFT</td>
<td>Only available to Johnson County Development Support clients.</td>
<td>Johnson County.</td>
<td>Provides services for Johnson County Development Support clients to sheltered workshops.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Human Service Transportation Services**

In addition to fixed-route transit and ADA paratransit services, enhanced mobility service users have several human service transportation (HSP) options for getting around throughout the metro area. Fifteen aging agency, county, municipal, or transit agency transportation HSPs exist within the region, along with other smaller-scale and private services.

Geographically, Jackson and Johnson County have the highest levels of coverage, especially in the urbanized areas. Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Miami, Cass, and Ray Counties have no more than one HSP option, and Leavenworth and Miami have none.
### Aging Agency Programs

Aging residents in Clay and Platte Counties are served by Senior Services boards, which provide transportation, housing, nutrition, and other services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Ridership (April 2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clay County Senior Services</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platte County Senior Services</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### County and Municipal Programs

Programs of various sizes and service models also provide rides to older adults and individuals with disabilities in the Kansas City region. Three taxi voucher programs exist in Olathe and Shawnee, KS, and Pleasant Hill, MO. A fourth taxi voucher program existed in Lenexa, KS, but on January 1, 2018, the administration of that program was taken over by KCATA, and integrated into the RideKC Taxi program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Ridership (April 2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olathe Taxi Voucher Program</td>
<td>4,128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawnee CityRides</td>
<td>486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasant Hill Community Bus Program</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OATS</td>
<td>10,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lee’s Summit</td>
<td>1,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Blue Springs</td>
<td>1,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberty Access</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transit Agency Programs
Aging residents in Clay and Platte Counties are served by Senior Services boards, which provide transportation, housing, nutrition, and other services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Ridership (April 2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excelsior Springs Omni Bus</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson County Catch-a-Ride</td>
<td>5,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EITAS</td>
<td>12,816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Origin/Destination Data
Origin/Destination data (OD data) was collected from programs around the region to analyze how enhanced mobility service users are travelling using current service models. Programs contributing data to this analysis include RideKC Freedom, RideKC Taxi, Shawnee CityRides, and Johnson County Catch-a-Ride.

Origin Data
Similar to the demographic distribution of transportation-disadvantaged populations in the region, described above, the data shows a majority of rides originated from within the urban core, with a decline in program usage at the periphery of the I-435 / I-470 / Mo-291 loop, and then an even more substantial decline in rural areas. However, participation “bleeds” beyond the I-435 / I-470 / Mo-291 loop more than the demographic profile of the region might suggest.

Additionally, with the advent of the RideKC Freedom and RideKC Taxi programs, both piloted in the Northland, the concentration of ride origins appears to be increasing northward.
Destination Data

In terms of geographic distribution, the concentration of destinations in the available data is oriented more centrally, implying that a majority of trip destinations are within the urban core. This is especially...
relevant for Johnson County, whose trip origins extend further south along the I-35 corridor. This suggests that riders are wanting to access services in urban Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas City, Kansas, and northeastern Johnson County. Few trips ended with destinations further out at the periphery of the region.

Figure 8 Heat Map of Enhanced Mobility Service Destinations

Figure 9 Concentration of Enhanced Mobility Service Destinations by Block Group