REGIONAL VISION

Greater Kansas City is a region of opportunity. Its robust economy, healthy environment and social capacity support the creativity, diversity and resilience of its people, places and communities.

Formed at the confluence of rivers, trails and trains on the border of two states, Greater Kansas City is a place of interconnection, where people of all backgrounds are welcome and where commerce and ideas flow as freely as the rivers and streams that run through and define it. Our people thrive here, in safe, walkable and well-maintained neighborhoods. We have abundant opportunities for education, and work in fulfilling jobs at businesses that can compete with any in the world. We enjoy, protect and preserve our region’s natural beauty. We care for our neighbors and our communities. We lead by example. Our region has the strength to not only bounce back from adversity, but bounce forward, confidently, into the future.

REGIONAL GOALS

**PEOPLE**

**SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE** enjoy independence and have choices in where to live, where to work and what they do. They have access to good schools, quality jobs and other resources that enable them to lead fulfilling lives and reach their full potential.

**ENGAGED PEOPLE** benefit from strong social networks with friends, family and coworkers. They are involved in the civic life of their neighborhoods and communities, and are empowered to help create and promote belonging, inclusion and meaningful connection.

**HEALTHY PEOPLE** thrive in clean and safe communities that support healthy eating and active lifestyles. They have access to health care systems that foster physical and mental well-being, including services for both treatment and prevention.

**PLACES**

**VIBRANT PLACES** provide easy access to jobs and services, offer choices in housing, recreation, shopping and transportation, and promote access to arts and culture. Vibrant places make efficient use of public and private resources and are attractive to residents and businesses.

**CONNECTED PLACES** are linked by corridors that encourage walking, biking and public transportation in addition to serving motor vehicles. These corridors support sustainable development and help connect residents and businesses to jobs, goods, services and other opportunities.

**GREEN PLACES** are ecologically healthy and resilient, creating real economic and social value. The conservation and restoration of natural areas and natural resources enhance both environmental and public health.

**COMMUNITIES**

**STRONG COMMUNITIES** provide a solid foundation for people and places to prosper. They knit together networks of people, families, businesses and civic organizations, nurturing relationships that engender trust and collaboration. They are equitable, cohesive and well governed. They respect history and community character while building for the future.
RTP 2050 Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment is an important first step in developing policies and strategies for RTP 2050. It can help clarify issues that the plan must address to help achieve the regional vision and goals. With input from policy committees and the public, the following have been identified as key needs for our future transportation system:

1. **Centers and Corridors Focus**
   People and communities need transportation infrastructure and services that are well coordinated with local land uses. Focusing energy around key activity centers and the corridors that connect them helps promote livable, vibrant, resilient and adaptable places with amenities that enhance residents’ quality of life and preserve the variety of distinctive neighborhoods throughout the region.

2. **Economic Vitality**
   The region needs a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system that supports the efficient movement of people and goods and promotes economic development.

3. **Access to Opportunity**
   Residents of all races, ages, abilities and income levels need a reliable transportation system that helps them connect to jobs, housing and services, and engages them in transportation decision-making processes.

4. **Transportation Choice**
   Residents need access to more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with “complete streets” that accommodate all users and a variety of housing and transportation choices, supported by a centers-and-corridors investment strategy that connects people to activity centers.

5. **Public Health and Safety**
   The region needs transportation infrastructure and services that foster safe travel, reduce fatalities and serious injuries, reduce pollutants that are harmful to health, and encourage active modes of transportation as an important part of healthy living.

6. **Healthy Environment**
   The region needs a transportation system that conserves, enhances and restores green infrastructure, protects air and water quality, reduces energy consumption, promotes climate resilience, and preserves cultural and historic resources.

7. **Data and Technology**
   The region needs to access, manage and share timely and reliable transportation data to support effective system performance, informed decision-making by travelers and safe and secure communications between vehicles and infrastructure. The region also needs to prepare for the implementation of emerging new transportation technologies.

8. **Financial Sustainability**
   The region needs sustainable public and private funding to support needed transportation investments. The region should consider lifecycle costs of investments (operations, maintenance and service delivery) early in the decision-making process to avoid creating an unsustainable burden on future transportation system users.
The following pages provide more detail for these needs, including their relationship to regional goals, current challenges, ways to measure progress, and committees and plans that can provide leadership and guidance for each.

**Need 1: Centers and Corridors Focus**

*People and communities need transportation infrastructure and services that are well coordinated with local land uses. Focusing energy around key activity centers and the corridors that connect them helps promote livable, vibrant, resilient and adaptable places with amenities that enhance residents’ quality of life and preserve the variety of distinctive neighborhoods throughout the region.*

**Related Policy Framework Goals:**

- Successful People
- Engaged People
- Healthy People
- Vibrant Places
- Connected Places
- Green Places
- Strong Communities

**Current challenges for RTP to address**

- Comprehensive plans, zoning regulations and municipal approval processes do not always support mixed uses.
- Redevelopment of underused places has often been more difficult and expensive than greenfield development.
- Current public transportation services do not provide coverage across all communities due to poor walkability, low density and single-use development.

**Potential ways to measure progress**

- Redevelopment in activity centers**
- Population and employment growth
- Walkability index: change in employment within a quarter mile of walkable areas
- Transit service levels between activity centers and on key corridors

**Leadership/guidance:**

**Committees:**

- Sustainable Places Policy Committee
- Total Transportation Policy Committee
- Technical Forecast Committee
- KC Communities for All Ages
- Regional Transit Coordinating Council

**Plans:**

- Regional Plan for Sustainable Development
- Smart Moves 3.0
- Regional Bikeways Plan
- Regional Pedestrian Policy Plan
Need 2: Economic Vitality

The region needs a well-maintained, multimodal transportation system that supports the efficient movement of people and goods and promotes economic development.

Current challenges for RTP to address

- System condition: Half of bridges are in fair or poor condition, and the percent of roads in poor condition is rising on both sides of the state line.
- System performance: Truck travel times are highly unreliable throughout the region.
- Funding: More money is needed to preserve, modernize, enhance all modes.

Potential ways to measure progress

- NHS bridge condition data*
- NHS pavement condition data*
- Federal/state/local/private funding (compared to needs)**
- Truck travel time reliability index*
- Peak travel time index

* Federally required measure  ** Data not currently tracked (not available or lacks tracking mechanism)

Leadership/guidance

Committees:
- Total Transportation Policy Committee
- Goods Movement Committee
- Sustainable Places Policy Committee

Plans:
- Regional Transportation Plan
Need 3: Access to Opportunity

Residents of all races, ages, abilities and income levels need a reliable transportation system that helps them connect to jobs, housing and services, and engages them in transportation decision-making processes.

Related Policy Framework Goals:
- Empowered People
- Engaged People
- Connected Places
- Strong Communities

Current challenges for RTP to address

- Job access: Those who rely on transit have fewer job opportunities due to a lack of transit service to growing job centers. Transit commutes take twice as long as driving alone.
- Disadvantaged populations: Service capacity for the transportation-disadvantaged (older adults, people with disabilities, low-income residents) does not meet current needs.
- Equity: Those who are transportation-disadvantaged often have less access to healthy food, health care, educational opportunities and other community services than automobile owners do. Transportation investments should promote fairness.

Potential ways to measure progress

- Percent of jobs accessible via transit within a 60-minute commute time
- Ratio of transportation-disadvantaged populations to vehicles/seats available through transportation providers in Link for Care by census tract**

** Data not currently tracked (not available or lacks tracking mechanism)

Driving Forces: Technology, globalization of the economy and demographic change will have significant impacts on access to opportunity in the region.

Leadership/guidance:

Committees:
- Total Transportation Policy Committee,
- Equity Network,
- Regional Transit Coordinating Committee,
- Sustainable Places Policy Committee

Plans:
- Regional Transportation Plan,
- Smart Moves 3.0 Plan,
- Fair Housing Equity Assessment,
- Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
**Need 4: Transportation Choice**

*Residents need access to more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods with “complete streets” that accommodate all users and a variety of housing and transportation choices, supported by a centers-and-corridors investment strategy that connects people to activity centers.*

### Related Policy Framework Goals:

- Successful People
- Engaged People
- Healthy People
- Vibrant Places
- Connected Places
- Strong Communities

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**Current challenges for RTP to address**

- **Density:** Population density is insufficient to support public transit in many parts of the region.
- **Development:** While many communities are seeing an increase in infill development and redevelopment, continued outward expansion will increase transportation costs.
- **Transit ridership:** Transit ridership is declining even as service levels are maintained or increased.
- **Behavior change:** Even where more transportation choices are available, there is not always enough public awareness about available options or motivation to change commuting habits.

**Potential ways to measure progress**

- Percent of work trips using alternative modes.
- Transit boardings per revenue service hour.
- Change in density at/near mobility hubs and along key centers and corridors.**
- Number of communities earning Community for All Ages recognition status.
- Public awareness surveys.**

**Data not currently tracked (not available or lacks tracking mechanism)**

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**Leadership/guidance:**

- **Committees:**
  - Total Transportation Policy Committee
  - KC Communities for All Ages
  - Regional Transit Coordinating Council
  - Sustainable Places Policy Committee

- **Plans:**
  - Regional Bikeways Plan
  - Regional Pedestrian Policy Plan
  - Fair Housing Equity Assessment
  - Smart Moves 3.0
  - Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
  - Communities for All Ages Toolkit
Regional Plan for Sustainable Development

**Need 5: Public Health and Safety**

The region needs transportation infrastructure and services that foster safe travel, reduce fatalities and serious injuries, reduce pollutants that are harmful to health, and encourage active modes of transportation as an important part of healthy living.

**Related Policy Framework Goals:**

- Empowered People
- Engaged People
- Vibrant Places
- Healthy People
- Strong Communities

**Current challenges for RTP to address**

- Fatalities: Traffic fatalities are increasing faster than vehicle miles traveled.
- Data: There is a lack of reliable data for non-motorized transportation.
- Barriers to active transportation: Many bike paths/lanes are impeded by physical barriers or do not connect across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Bicycle facilities: While the region is adding more linear miles of bike lanes, a lower percentage of these facilities are connecting to activity centers.
- Walkability: A significant portion of neighborhoods and communities in the region have low walkability scores.
- Air quality: The transportation system is responsible for a significant share of air pollution in the region.

**Potential ways to measure progress**

- Traffic fatalities and fatality rate*
- Length of continuous regional bike paths/lanes**
- Percent of bicycle facility mileage serving activity centers
- Number of communities earning Bicycle Friendly and Walk Friendly designation**
- Number of communities with bicycle plans**
- Number of communities with complete streets policies
- Walkability scores**
- Ground-level ozone and particulate matter concentrations

* Federally required measure   ** Data not currently tracked (not available or lacks tracking mechanism)

**Driving Forces:** Technology and demographic change will have significant impacts on public health and safety in the region.

**Leadership/guidance:**

- Committees:
  - Destination Safe Coalition
  - Total Transportation Policy Committee
  - Active Transportation Programming Committee
  - Air Quality Forum
Need 6: Healthy Environment
The region needs a transportation system that conserves, enhances and restores green infrastructure, protects air and water quality, reduces energy consumption, promotes climate resilience, and preserves cultural and historic resources.

Current challenges for RTP to address
- Air quality: Vehicle miles traveled are increasing, leading to increased emissions that harm air quality. Commuters rely heavily on driving alone, increasing both VMT and harmful emissions.
- Water quality: Impervious surfaces increase stormwater runoff, contributing to increased flood risks and water quality impairments.
- Green infrastructure: The planning, design and management of transportation facilities often degrade natural resources, leading to impaired air and water quality, fragmented habitat, streambank erosion and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Energy conservation: Urbanized areas create heat islands, resulting in increased energy demand, public and environmental health threats.
- Historic preservation: Transportation decisions may impact cultural or historic resources.
- Natural hazards: Hotter temperatures and extremes in wet and dry weather may increase risks and vulnerabilities associated with public health and safety, mobility and environmental quality.

Potential ways to measure progress
- Percent of native landscaping in road rights-of-way**
- Percent of impervious area attributable to transportation (roads and parking)**
- Percent of canopy coverage in activity centers and corridors
- Number and severity of disaster declarations**
- Vehicle miles traveled per capita
- Ambient concentrations of ozone and particulate matter
- Number of leaking underground storage tanks adjacent to transportation facilities
- Number of electric vehicles in the region
- Weather-related deaths
- Chloride levels in streams adjacent to area roadways
  ** Data not currently tracked (not available or lacks tracking mechanism)

Leadership/guidance:

Committees:
- Air Quality Forum
- Water Quality Education Committee
- Total Transportation Policy Committee
- Metropolitan Emergency Managers Committee
- Sustainable Places Policy Committee
- Green Infrastructure Advisory Committee

Plans:
- Clean Air Action Plan
- Green Infrastructure Framework
- Regional Transportation Plan
- Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Regional Climate Resilience Strategy
- Kansas City, Missouri, Climate Protection Plan

**Need 7: Data and Technology**

*The region needs to access, manage and share timely and reliable transportation data to support effective system performance, informed decision-making by travelers and safe and secure communications between vehicles and infrastructure. The region also needs to prepare for the implementation of emerging new transportation technologies.*

Current challenges for RTP to address

- Public transportation: Travelers require timely, accessible information about public transportation services in order to use them effectively.
- Funding: Transportation data has intrinsic value that may be monetized in some cases.
- Industry-wide standards for new technologies are needed.
- Project design does not take potential technology needs into account; in some cases small adjustments could leverage considerable future savings.

Driving Forces: Technological changes will have a significant impact on the region. Industry is producing new vehicles with greater capacity for communication and interaction with other vehicles and roadside devices.
Potential ways to measure progress

- Number of parties involved in data sharing agreements among regional transportation agencies**
- Value of transportation data managed by regional public-sector agencies**
- Regional coverage of key transportation data sets (ex. pavement condition, sidewalks, etc.)**
- Number of agencies adopting stronger “state of good repair” policies for major roadways (paint striping, clear and up-to-date signage, etc.)**

** Data not currently tracked (not available or lacks tracking mechanism)

Leadership/guidance:

Committees:
- Total Transportation Policy Committee
- Air Quality Forum
- Operation Green Light Steering Committee
- Highway Committee
- Regional Transit Coordinating Council
- KC Scout Board of Directors
- AV Task Force

Plans:
- Regional ITS Architecture
- Operation Green Light strategic plan
- Automated Vehicle Policy Framework

Need 8: Financial Sustainability

The region needs sustainable public and private funding to support needed transportation investments. The region should consider lifecycle costs of investments (operations, maintenance and service delivery) early in the decision-making process to avoid creating an unsustainable burden on future transportation system users.

Driving Forces:

The new global economy and extreme weather will all have a significant impact on revenue generating mechanisms.

Current challenges for RTP to address

- Diminishing purchasing power of current motor fuel taxes due to inflation, improved fuel efficiencies and transition to alternative fuel vehicles.
- Operations and maintenance costs will continue to grow leaving less for new projects.
• Need for more diversified funding sources to be adaptive and increase budget stability in the future. State and federal revenues are uncertain and unreliable.
• Leveraging funding sourced through public private partnerships.
• Need to ensure projects in plan have higher return on investment related to 11 policy areas.
• New models of funding that consider new technologies, including sources that are VMT based.
• Alternative: There is a need to explore new models of funding that fully exploit existing and new technologies that use pricing to affect travel behavior while more precisely charging users for the costs their vehicles impose on transportation infrastructure and performance. Topics may include "surge pricing" during peak periods and calculating user fees based on VMT and weight of vehicle.

Potential ways to measure progress (need more here)
• Change in revenue from public and private sources over time.
• Life cycle cost of projects
• Benefit/cost ratio of projects or programs of projects

Leadership/guidance
• Committees: Total Transportation Policy Committee and transportation policy committees
• Plans: All