MARC
MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL

Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan

Guiding Investment in Enhanced Mobility for Older Adults

And Individuals with Disabilities in the Kansas City Region

Mid-America Regional Council

December 2025

Title VI Statement

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects people from discrimination based on race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The Federal Transit Administration works to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation in support of our mission to enhance the social and economic quality of life for all Americans. The FTA Office of Civil Rights is responsible for monitoring FTA recipients' Title VI programs and ensuring their compliance with Title VI requirements.

For more information, please refer to Title VI Circular 4702.1(B), "Title VI Requirements and Guidelines for Federal Transit Administration Recipients."

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination and ensures equal opportunity and access for persons with disabilities.

The Federal Transit Administration works to ensure nondiscriminatory transportation in support of our mission to enhance the social and economic quality of life for all Americans. The FTA Office of Civil Rights is responsible for civil rights compliance and monitoring to ensure nondiscriminatory provision of public transit services.

Contact Information

Lukas Yanni, AICP
Transportation Planner III
816-701-8305
lyanni@marc.org

600 Broadway, Suite 200
Kansas City, MO 64105
www.marc.org

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Introduction

Anyone can become disabled at any time, and mobility becomes more challenging as we age. Access to transportation and mobility services is essential for socializing, attending a place of worship, participating in community activities, and accessing healthcare, employment, recreation and groceries. Without these services, quality of life is severely limited.

This underscores the importance of the Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan (referred to as the Coordinated Plan or CPT-HSTP). The plan identifies transportation issues, service overlaps, and gaps for vulnerable populations including older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals. It also outlines goals and strategies to address these issues.

Background

The Coordinated Plan is developed by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) in accordance with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 9070.1(G). MARC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kansas City region. This federally mandated plan serves two primary purposes: to direct the allocation of FTA Section 5310 funding and to provide a strategic framework for transit and mobility providers to improve service for the region's priority populations — older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, and veterans. The plan is structured around four core objectives:

- Inventory current transportation resources across all sectors.
- Analyze unmet needs through robust community assessment.
- Formulate strategies to fill identified service gaps.
- Prioritize projects for funding and implementation.

This process ensures that investments in public transit and human services transportation encompassing fixed-route, paratransit, and other mobility services, are coordinated, strategic, and responsive to needs identified by the community.

Existing Conditions

The Kansas City region is divided by state, county and city boundaries, making regional coordination essential. The nine county MARC region includes the states of Kansas and Missouri, and the counties of Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson, Miami, Platte, Cass, Clay, Ray, and Jackson. Most of the region's population lives within the Kansas City,

Missouri city limits. The region's population centers range from small rural communities to dense urban areas. The Large Urban Area includes Kansas City, Missouri; Kansas City, Kansas; and many suburban communities in Johnson County. The Kansas and Missouri rivers are the region's two major waterways, with Kansas City, Missouri bisected by the Missouri River.

Funding

Service providers cite funding as a primary challenge. At the federal level, FTA Section 5310 funding provides most financial support for ADA and enhanced mobility services in the Kansas City region. Local funding, Medicaid, Medicare (Medicare Advantage Part C, limited use cases), and Affordable Care Act mechanisms also contribute, but at lower levels. Section 5310 funds are competitive, and regional needs are growing as the senior population increases.

Demographics

According to 2019-2023 ACS 5-year estimate data, the MARC nine-county area is home to more than 2.1 million people. About 12% of the population over age 5 report having a disability. Ambulatory disabilities are most prevalent among adults over 35, highlighting a widespread need for accessible transportation. As the 35-64 age group with high ambulatory disability rates ages, pressure on specialized transportation services will intensify.

Currently, 15% of the population is 65 or older, and an additional 19% is between 50 and 64, signaling a demographic shift. Counties like Ray and Miami anticipate particularly high growth, demanding scalable transportation solutions for older adults.

More than a quarter of the region's veteran population lives with a disability, and nearly half of veterans in poverty also have a disability. This intersection creates a distinct need for reliable, accessible transportation tailored to this community.

Transportation barriers are concentrated in specific areas. Wyandotte and Jackson Counties have higher-than-average poverty rates and a higher percentage of households with no vehicle available. This "transportation insecurity" severely limits access to jobs, healthcare, and essential services for tens of thousands of residents.

Transportation Options

The Kansas City region has the most freeway lane miles per-capita in the United States. Combined with its sprawling suburbs, the region lends itself to transportation by car.

However, under the Coordinated Plan, many individuals with disabilities, older adults and low-income residents may not own or be unable to operate a personal vehicle. Public transportation in the region is served by a fixed-route system operated under RideKC, along with various rideshare services such as zTrip and IRIS. Additional specialized and ADA-compliant mobility services are also available.

Like many U.S. cities, these services are more present in the urban core and denser areas of the region but become more sparse or difficult to access in the rural areas. Service availability also varies by time of day, with notable gaps primarily on weekends.

Trip Origins and Destinations

Origin and destination data helps identify where key populations live and where they need to go. For this plan, origin/destination data was collected using Replica, a third-party web-based platform. The tool integrates sources such as U.S. Census data and anonymized cell phone data to create accurate travel demand maps and datasets. These insights help assess the travel needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Public Outreach

Public outreach is an essential part of the Coordinated Plan. Input from residents and stakeholders helped identify regional needs and informed the plan's goals and strategies.

Throughout the planning process, MARC staff collaborated with regional transportation committees, transit providers, public organizations and non-profits that work with individuals with disabilities and older adults, and transit and riders. Feedback from related efforts such as the Natural Hazard Transportation Risk Assessment and Connected KC 2050, was also incorporated.

A public survey was conducted from late summer through early fall 2025 received 265 responses. The survey was available online and in print, and was advertised and promoted by MARC, Mobility Advisory Committee member agencies, and regional partners. It was available in both English and Spanish.

In conjunction with local non-profits, MARC held three public workshops to engage the plan's subject populations directly affected by regional transit planning. Approximately 50 to 60 individuals attended the sessions, and each workshop was well received by both staff and riders.

The workshops were held at the service locations of the following organizations:

- **Ability KC:** A comprehensive outpatient medical rehabilitation facility that serves people with a wide range of disabilities. Reliable transportation is essential for

getting patients to and from their appointments.

- **The Whole Person:** An organization that aims to help individuals with disabilities to live independently by supporting their ability to secure housing, transportation, and employment opportunities.
- **Alphapointe:** One of the Kansas City region's largest organizations dedicated to serving people with vision loss and low vision individuals. They help provide employment, job training and rehabilitation services. Transportation remains a significant challenge for people with vision loss.

Feedback from riders and staff revealed the three primary concerns:

- Riders don't have access to easy-to-understand information, especially visually impaired users.
- Changes to the system can come as a surprise and leave transit dependent people stuck if they purchased or leased a home or apartment based on transit access.
- Riders with disabilities feel deprioritized by changes to paratransit service being combined with on-demand service.

Desired Improvements

Acknowledging limited regional resources, the public survey asked respondents to identify their top priority among three options:

a. **Service to more places**, even if it means longer wait times, more transfers, or higher costs
b. **Cheaper service**, even if it means that service quality may be compromised
c. **More reliable on-time performance**, even if it means smaller service areas

As shown in below, the results showed that 55% of respondents preferred service to more places, 29% preferred more reliable on-time performance, and 16% favored cheaper service.

Figure 1 – Desired Improvements Sentiment
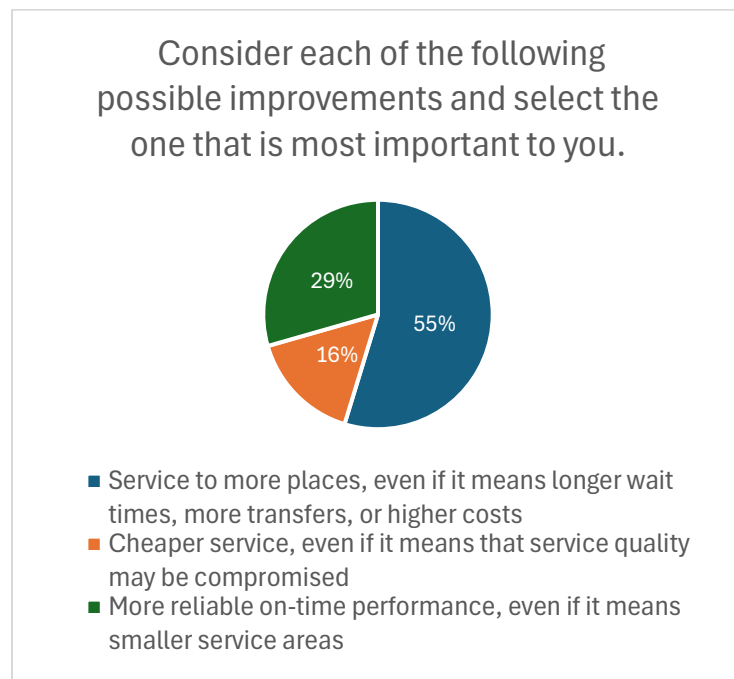
Needs Analysis

MARC staff conducted a comprehensive needs analysis to identify gaps in the Kansas City region's public transportation system. The findings, drawn from service provider data, rider feedback, and public workshops, are organized into five key areas: geographic coverage, level of service, system capacity, user satisfaction, and information accessibility.

The findings underscore the complexity of the region's transit challenges and the need for a coordinated, well-funded response to improve mobility, support an aging population, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

Geographic Gaps

Transit services are concentrated in urban cores, leaving suburban and rural areas with limited or no access. Counties like Ray, Leavenworth, Cass, and Miami have service shortages. Additionally, many cities in Jackson County have lost fixed-route service, resulting in transportation challenges for their senior populations.

Level of Service Gaps

Paratransit and demand-response services require advance booking, limiting rider spontaneity. A lack of evening and weekend service restricts access to recreational and social activities. Inconsistent driver training also affects the quality of assistance for riders with mobility needs, especially those who need door-to-door support.

Capacity Gaps

Many service providers report being under-resourced, citing a lack of staff, vehicles, and trained drivers to meet current demand. This challenge is expected to grow as the region's population continues to age and expand into suburban areas farther from urban centers.

User Satisfaction Gaps

Riders expressed dissatisfaction with their inability to travel freely, at any time, to any destination, from any location. These concerns underscore the widespread limitations in geographic coverage and service hours.

Information and Accessibility Gaps

A disconnect exists between available services and public awareness. Over half of survey respondents were unsure of their eligibility for ADA paratransit, and outdated or unclear information confuses residents, a problem exacerbated by recent and ongoing service changes.

Goals and Strategies

The goals and strategies in this plan build on those from the previous version. MARC staff developed the updated framework through public surveys and workshops, and by reviewing coordinated plans from peer and aspirational regions identified in MARC's Peer Regions Transit Report[1]. Additional guidance came from other relevant MARC plans.

The Mobility Advisory Committee went through a series of revisions to the goals and their accompanying implementation strategies. The following six goals and their strategies, labeled by letter, were adopted by the committee and are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Coordinated Plan Goals and Strategies

1	Maintain existing regional mobility service levels	🛠
a	Ensure that existing service levels are maintained by replacing vehicles past their useful life.	
b	Ensure that existing service levels are maintained by sustaining funding levels for subsidized fare programs	
c	Secure sustainable funding partnerships. Eligible project examples: Vehicle replacement, subsidized program continuation	

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[1] Peer Regions Transit Report, MARC, 2024

2	**Expand regional mobility service levels**	
a	Expand service hours into nights, early mornings, or increase service frequency and/or responsiveness, including weekends	
b	Expand level of service from curb-to-curb to door-to-door, door-through-door, or beyond	
c	Expand the types of trips that are eligible for service populations (e.g. work-based trips, recreational trips, utilitarian trips such as grocery stores and pharmacies, etc.)	
d	Leverage partnerships to reduce duplication	
e	Expand days of service, including weekends	
f	Improve administrative efficiency through mobility management and coordination to improve cross-jurisdictional transportation. Eligible Project Examples: Expanding hours, days, or geographic coverage; improving inter-regional travel; enhancing levels of service	
3	**Improve the quality and accessibility of information to the public**	
a	Continue to improve the region's One-Call/One-Click capabilities	
b	Ensure and regularly test ADA accessibility and intuitiveness of mobile apps and web information	
c	Improve administrative efficiency through mobility management to reduce the complexity of information being conveyed to the public	
d	Publicize and market changes to existing services, service expansions, and/or the introduction of new services	
e	Engage transportation-disadvantaged populations directly to improve our knowledge of what they need	
f	Utilize data to make informed decisions about enhanced mobility services	
g	Establish regional service standards	
h	Ensure that all service providers are equipped with data tracking capabilities	
i	Ensure that service providers are coordinating with MARC staff to map, analyze, and publicize service areas, trends, and network gaps. Eligible Project Examples: Marketing materials, mobility management, one-call/one-click functionality, data resources	

4	**Bridge gaps in the built environment to improve network accessibility**	
a	Construct ADA-accessible infrastructure to improve safety and accessibility of transit facilities	
b	As on-demand services propagate, it will be important to consider how destinations beyond transit facilities are made accessible, including integrating universal design principles into local development policies across the region.	
c	Support the implementation of Smart Moves 3.0 recommendations, including mobility hubs and active transportation infrastructure. Eligible project examples: ADA sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalk signals, other built environment improvements	
5	**Integrate and coordinate related planning efforts, communications, initiatives and programs**	
a	Ensure accessibility needs of older adults and people with disabilities are considered through other transportation planning efforts and initiatives, such as the Smart Moves regional transit plan, local land use development regulations, ADA implementation programs, universal design principles in the development of application-based solutions, etc.	
b	Support efforts to secure new sources of funding to support investment in capital and operating costs of the transportation system, including fixed route services, ADA paratransit and non-ADA special transportation services	
c	Leverage and strengthen partnerships to improve cross-jurisdictional, cross-sector collaboration and coordination amongst public, private and non-profit sectors	
6	**Support regional transportation goals**	
a	Support programs which allow for purchase of low and no-emission vehicles for public and private fleets	
b	Encourage transportation providers to offer charging facilities for low and no-emissions vehicles	
c	Provide educational programs on the benefits and convenience of fleet electrification	
d	Support new and innovative transportation services, facilities and technologies to ensure safe and efficient travel for people and goods	
e	Collaborate with local governments to create mobility hubs in key areas where transportation options come together. Make it easy to access and	

		switch between bikes, buses, micro transit, rental cars, ride-hailing services and other modes and services	
	f	Support digital applications to enhance safety, accessibility and real-time information about the regional transportation system	

2: Existing Conditions

MARC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kansas City region and spans nine counties across two states. The boundaries are shown below in Figure 2. The five counties in Kansas are Platte, Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson, and Miami, and the four in Missouri are Clay, Ray, Jackson, and Cass. There is one large Urbanized Area (UZA), which encompasses Kansas City, Missouri. There are several smaller UZAs as well (populations less than 200,000), however only the Kansas City UZA is administered by the Kansas City Area Regional Transportation Authority (KCATA).

Figure 2 – Kansas City Region Urban Areas
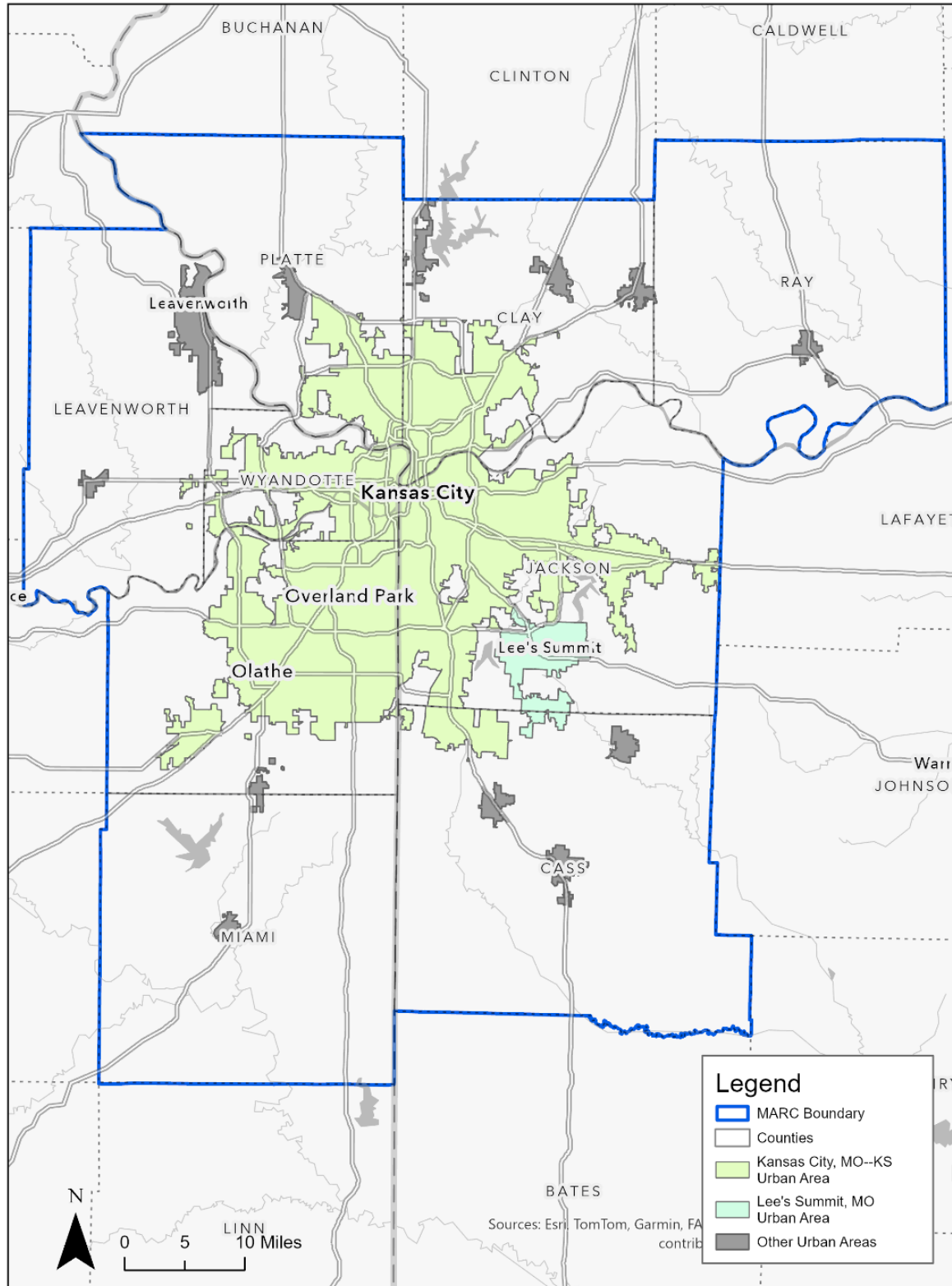
Source: MARC, US Census Bureau

Funding

FTA Section 5310

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310 (49 U.S.C 5310), commonly referred to as Section 5310, is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program that provides financial assistance to meet the transportation needs for older adults and people with disabilities. Section 5310 funding is the most common source of funding for most enhanced and specialized transportation providers. Funding awarded by the program can be used primarily for capital expenses, acquisition of contracted services, mobility management programs, training programs, construction of ADA compliant amenities at transit stops, and other similar projects. The FTA website has a Section 5310 webpage[2] with more information including a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page and examples of eligible projects. Eligible subrecipient organizations include operators of public transportation, private non-profits, and state or local government agencies. FTA's Circular 9070.1(H)[3] outlines the requirements and guidance for the program.

KCATA is the designated recipient of Section 5310 funds for the Kansas City UZA. Programming for Section 5310 funds occurs every other year or as determined by the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between MARC and KCATA, and by the designated recipient's Program Management Plan (PMP). Organizations in the region's small UZA's or other outlying areas can apply for Section 5310 funds directly through their respective state DOTs.

Section 5310 funding is competitive, and generally there are more applicants than there are funds available. Organizations and programs that provide mobility services to eligible populations should not and cannot rely only on Section 5310 alone for funding for their projects. Section 5310 funds cover up to 80% of capital costs and 50% for operating assistance. The remaining percentage of costs must be covered by a local matching contribution; this can come from a state, city or county government (including Departments of Health, etc.), or private sources like donations (including in-kind contributions) or the applicant organization's own budget.

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

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[2] Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310
[3] FTA Circular 9070.1H, November 2024

from emergency ambulance service, NEMT entails transportation to and from visits with your Primary Care Physician or specialist (including pregnancy check-ups), behavioral health follow-ups after hospital stay, dental appointments, counseling, eye exams, etc. As NEMT is not for emergencies it can include mileage reimbursement, public transportation, vanpool, taxi, ride shares, or air transportation in limited circumstances. Medicare can also be used for medical transportation, but only in the case of emergency, or if the user otherwise requires ambulance transportation. The Department of Veterans Affairs also provides NEMT services for low-income, disabled, or pensioned veterans.

Provider-Side Funding

Transportation currently remains an eligible expense under Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and value-based care initiatives. Kansas HCBS waivers list transportation as a supportive service to help individuals access medical care, community activities, and daily living needs. Similarly in Missouri, HCBS waivers administered in Missouri list transportation as a supportive service for individuals with disabilities. In Missouri, Senate Bill 40 is a state tax levy that provides funding for residential, vocational and other programs and services through boards throughout the state. Once formed, a board may create sheltered workshops, residential facilities, or related services for the care or employment of individuals with disabilities. These funds may be used in part to fund transportation services for these populations. 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. These funds are used by Area Agencies on Aging to fund essential service transportation (e.g. NEMTs, grocery trips), and site transportation (e.g. congregate meals). There are also general revenue funds available from states. In Missouri, the Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program (MEHTAP) reimburses eligible not-for-profit organizations for operating expenses for approved transportation projects.

Demographics

According to the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, roughly 12% of the area's 2.1 million people over the age of five in MARC's nine county service area reported having at least one disability. Of those, 39% were over the age of 65.

As listed in Figure 3, the most prevalent disabilities in the Kansas City region with those above 35 are ambulatory disabilities. Cognitive disabilities are the most prevalent for younger age groups. In either case, transportation is likely to be a challenge. The significantly higher incidences of ambulatory disabilities among the 35 to 64 year age

group when compared to older cohorts will potentially stress the existing service infrastructure as that group ages into the 65 years and older age group.

Figure 3 – Instances of Disability by Age Group

Instances of Disabilites in the Kansas City Region by Age
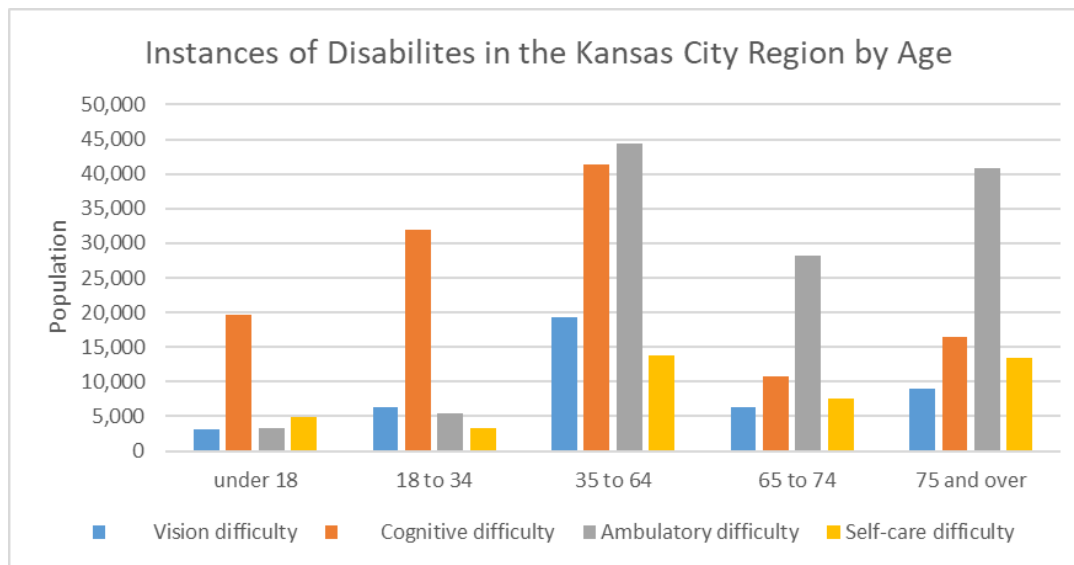
Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data

Older Adults

Approximately 15% of the region is currently 65 or older. The share of the regional population aged 65 and older is expected to grow substantially over the next 15 years, as about 19% 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 Ray County, Missouri and Miami County, Kansas (22%). Figure 4 shows the populations aged 50-64 and the 65 and older populations by county, and Figure 5 shows the over 65 year old population per square mile.

Figure 4 – Aging Populationand Potential Growth by County
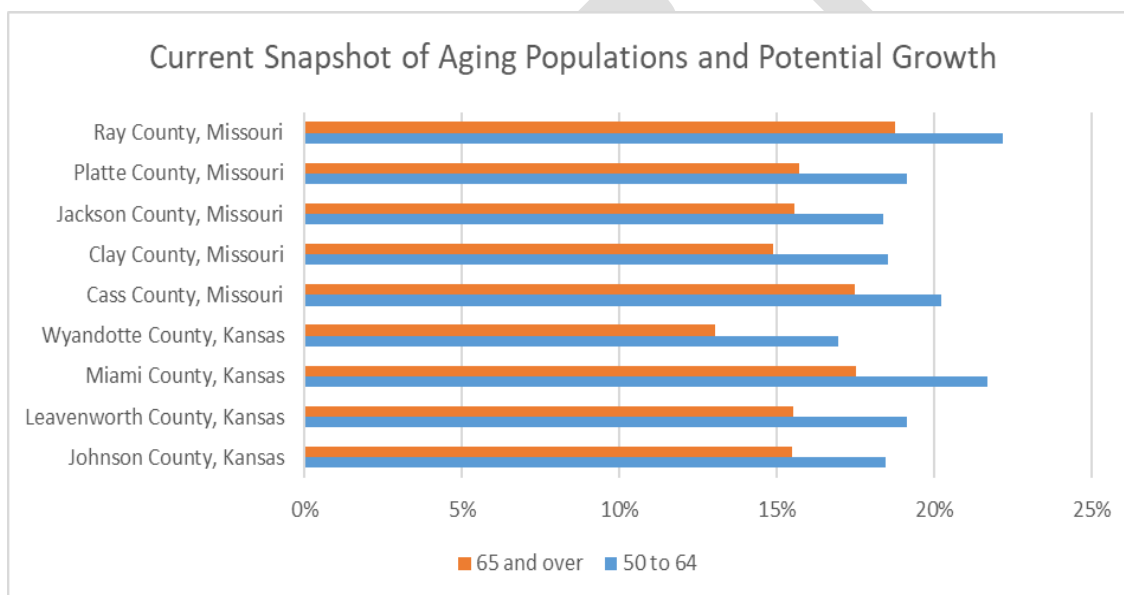
Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data

Figure 5 – Kansas City Region Elderly Population (65 or Older) per Square Mile
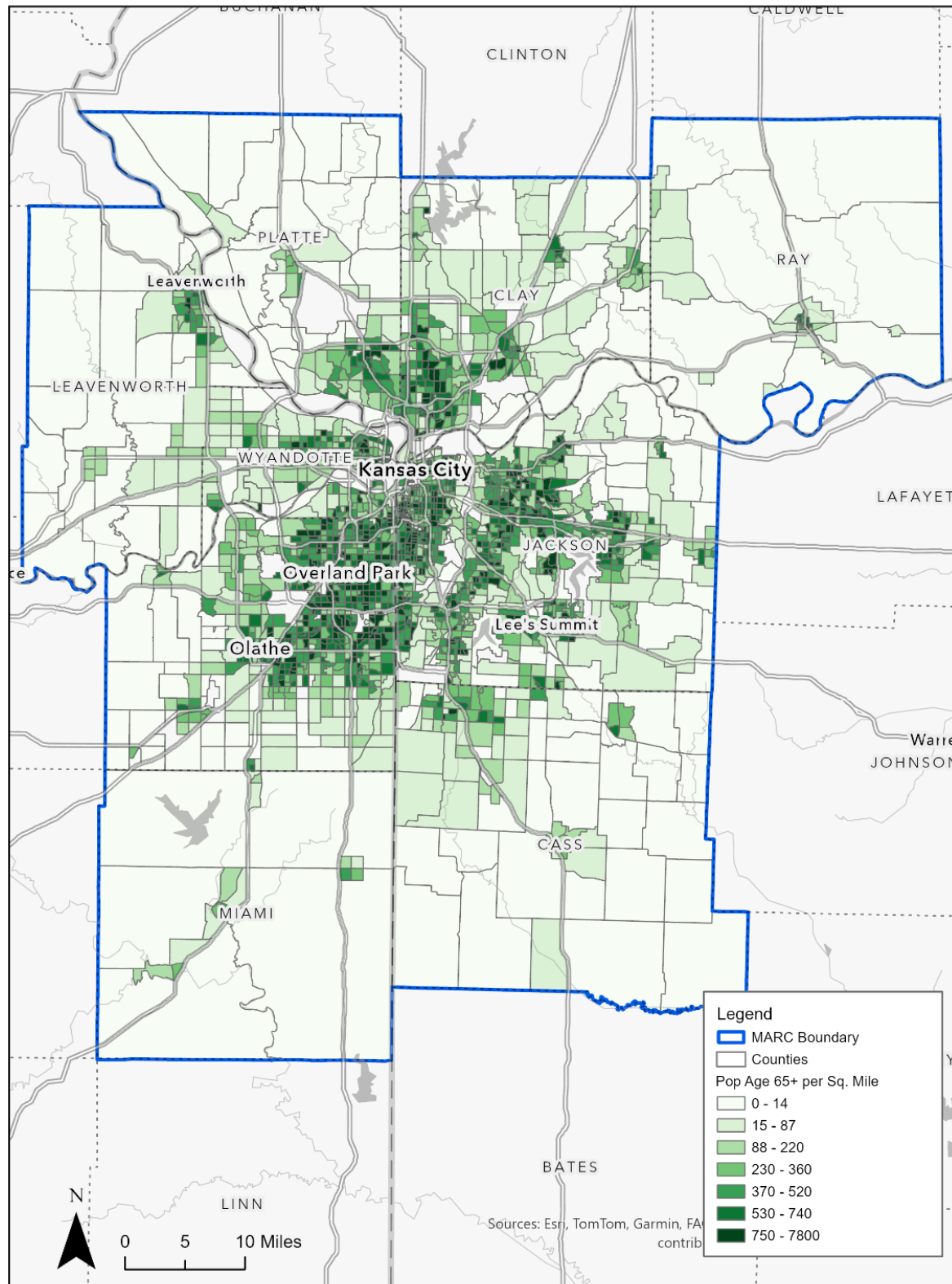
Source: MARC, Replica, Spring 2025 Dataset, Block Group Level

Veterans

In the Kansas City region, about 7% of the 18 and older population are veterans. 28% of that population has a disability, and 6% are below the poverty line. Of those veterans that are below the poverty line, 47% also have a disability.

Figure 6 – Veteren Population by Age
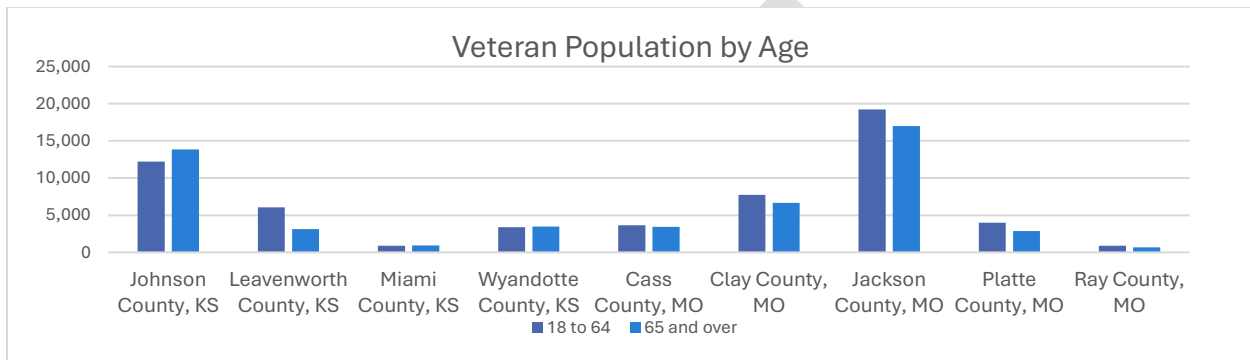
Figure 7 – Veterans as Proportion of Age Group
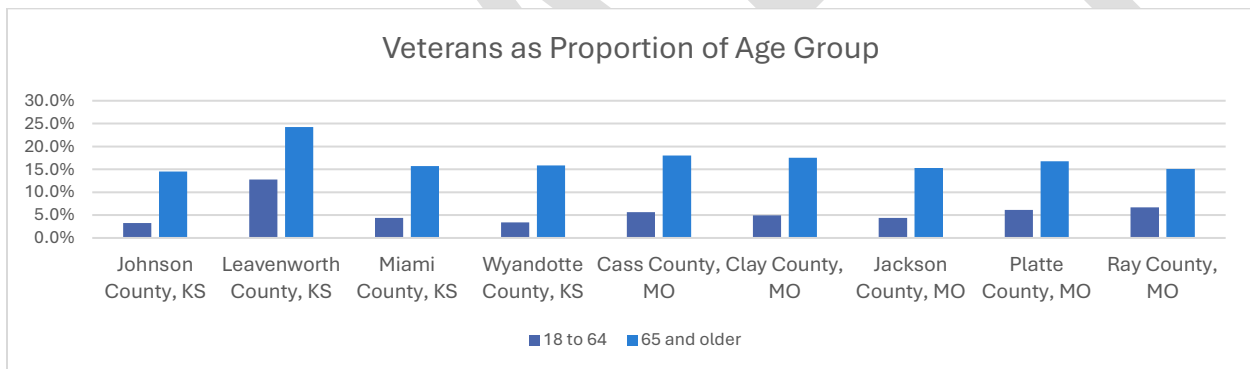
Figure 8 – Veteran Disability Characteristics
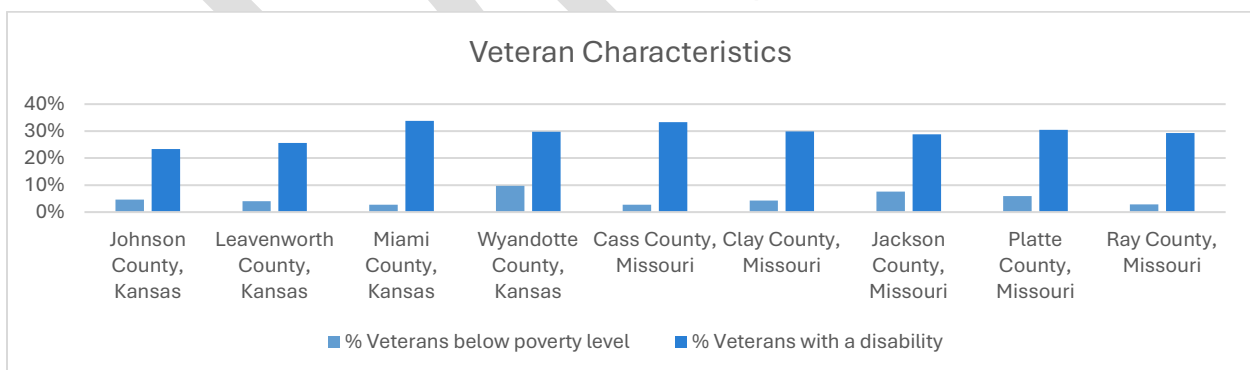
Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data

Low-Income Households

Transportation is also a challenge for households with low-income and those without access to personal vehicles. 10% of the region's households reported income below the federal poverty line, and 18% reported income below twice the federal poverty level. Wyandotte County has the highest concentration of poverty in the region, with 17% of households below the federal poverty level, and 32% below twice the federal level. Both Jackson County, Missouri and Wyandotte County, Kansas have poverty rates that exceed the national average.

Figure 9 – Ratio of Income to Poverty Level
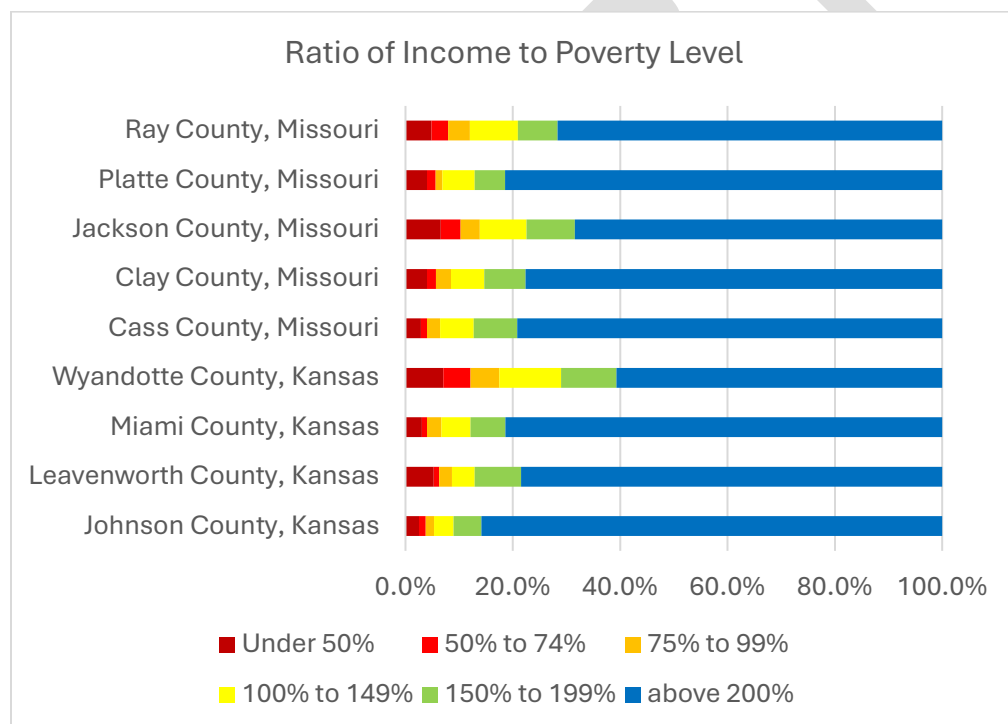
Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data

Vehicle ownership also affects a household's transportation options. Households without access to a vehicle must rely on alternative modes of transportation, which can limit employment options and complicate daily life, especially for households with older adults or individuals with disabilities. 5.4% of the region's households are without a vehicle available, with around 3% higher concentration in both Jackson and Wyandotte counties. These counties also report higher-than-average poverty rates. In contrast, all other counties exceed the regional average of 58% for households owning two or more vehicles.

Key Destinations

After understanding where target populations live, knowing where they need to go is equally important. MARC previous coordinated plan identified that regional hospitals, clinics, dialysis centers, (collectively referred to as health care centers), senior centers, and colleges as essential locations for transit and paratransit service.

In the region, 74% of colleges, 47% of hospitals and health care facilities, and 40% of senior centers are accessible by fixed-route transit. Accessibility is defined as being within three quarters of a mile of a transit stop, in alignment with the complimentary paratransit boundary.

Other important locations include the Country Club Plaza, Kansas City International Airport and the Truman Sports Complex. While technically accessible by fixed-route transit, service availability may be limited by time-of-day and day-of-week constraints.

Figure 10 – Colleges Served by Transit
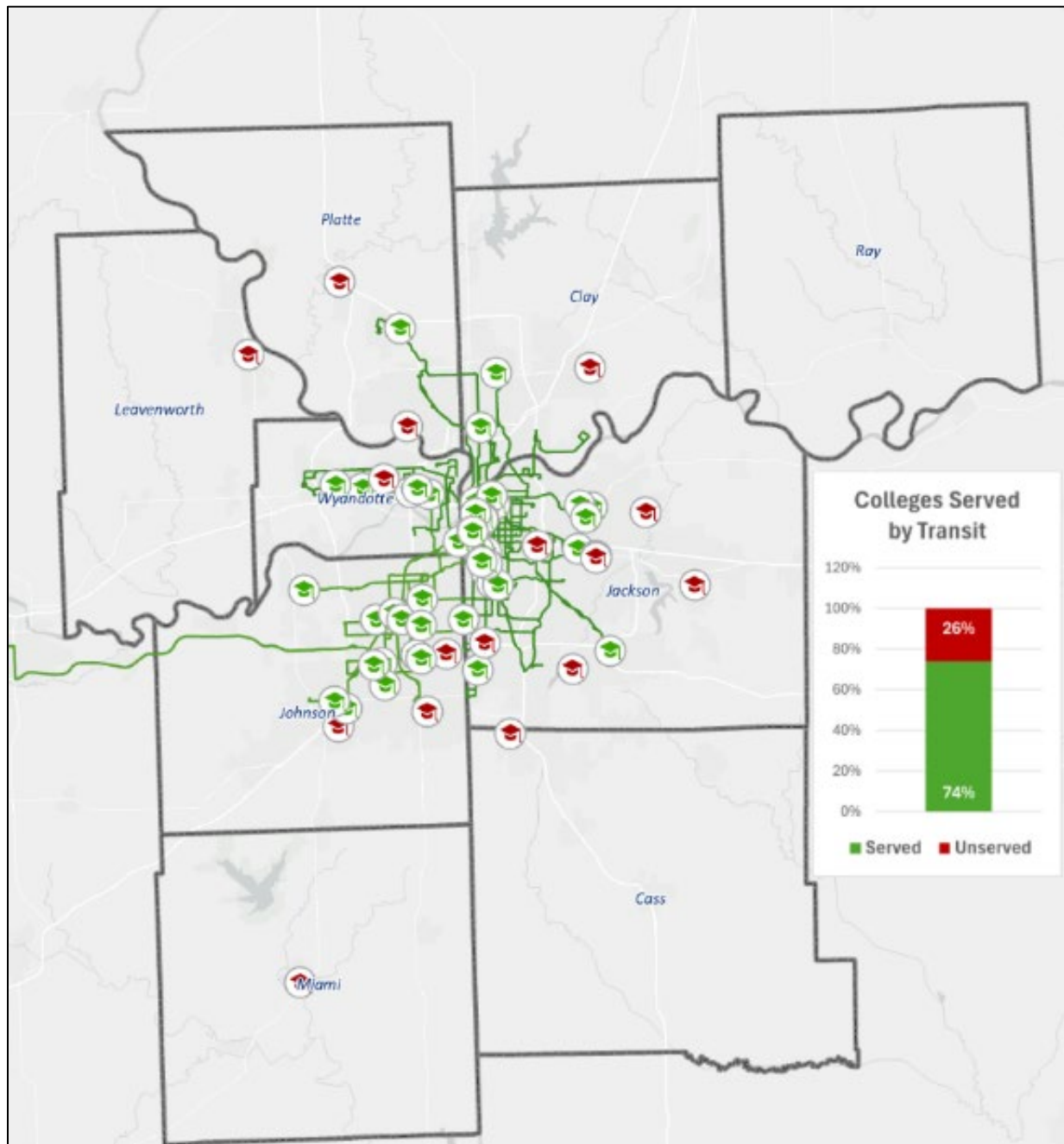
Source: MARC

Figure 11 – Health Care Centers Served by Transit
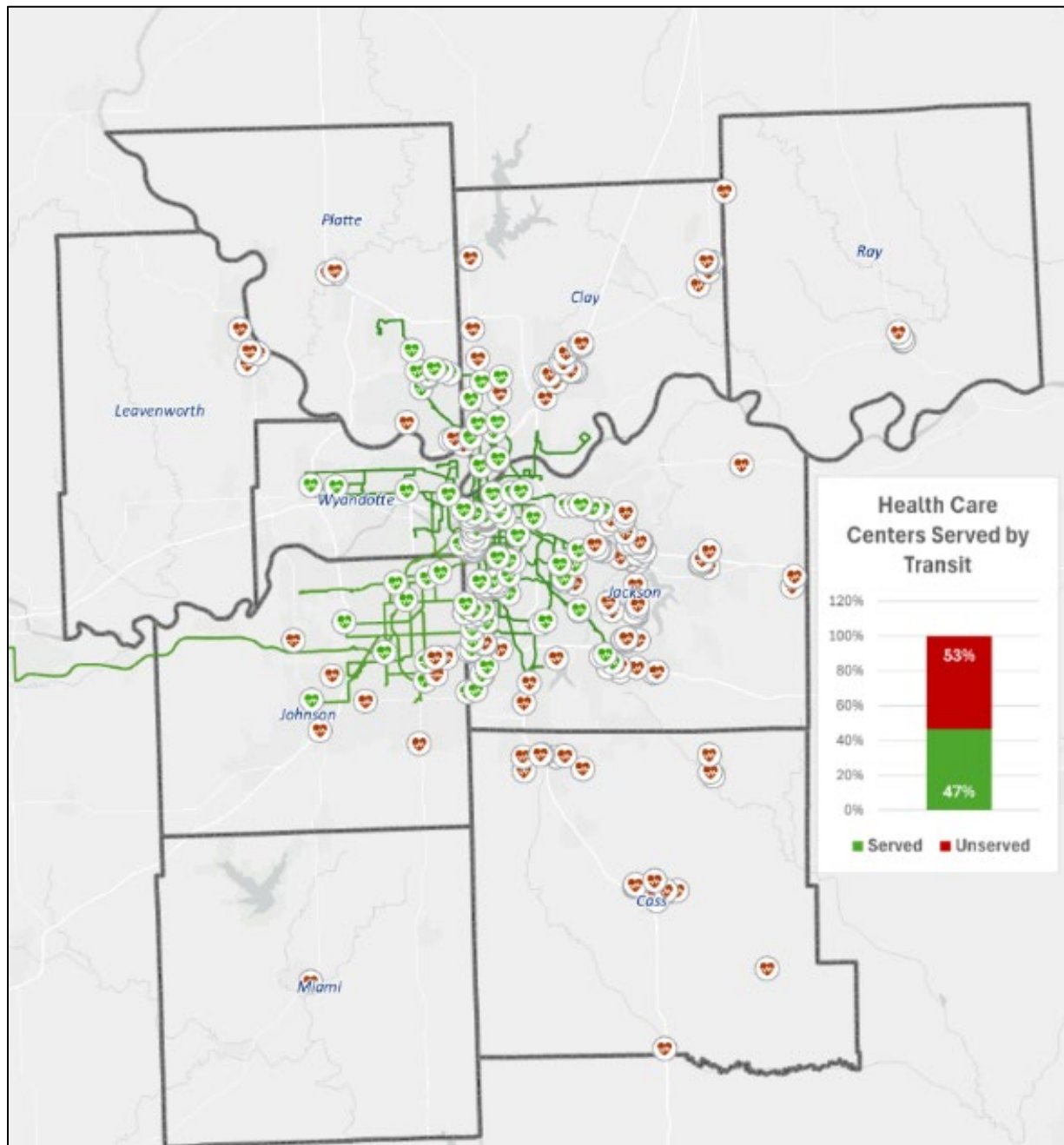
Source: MARC

Figure 12 – Senior Centers Served by Transit
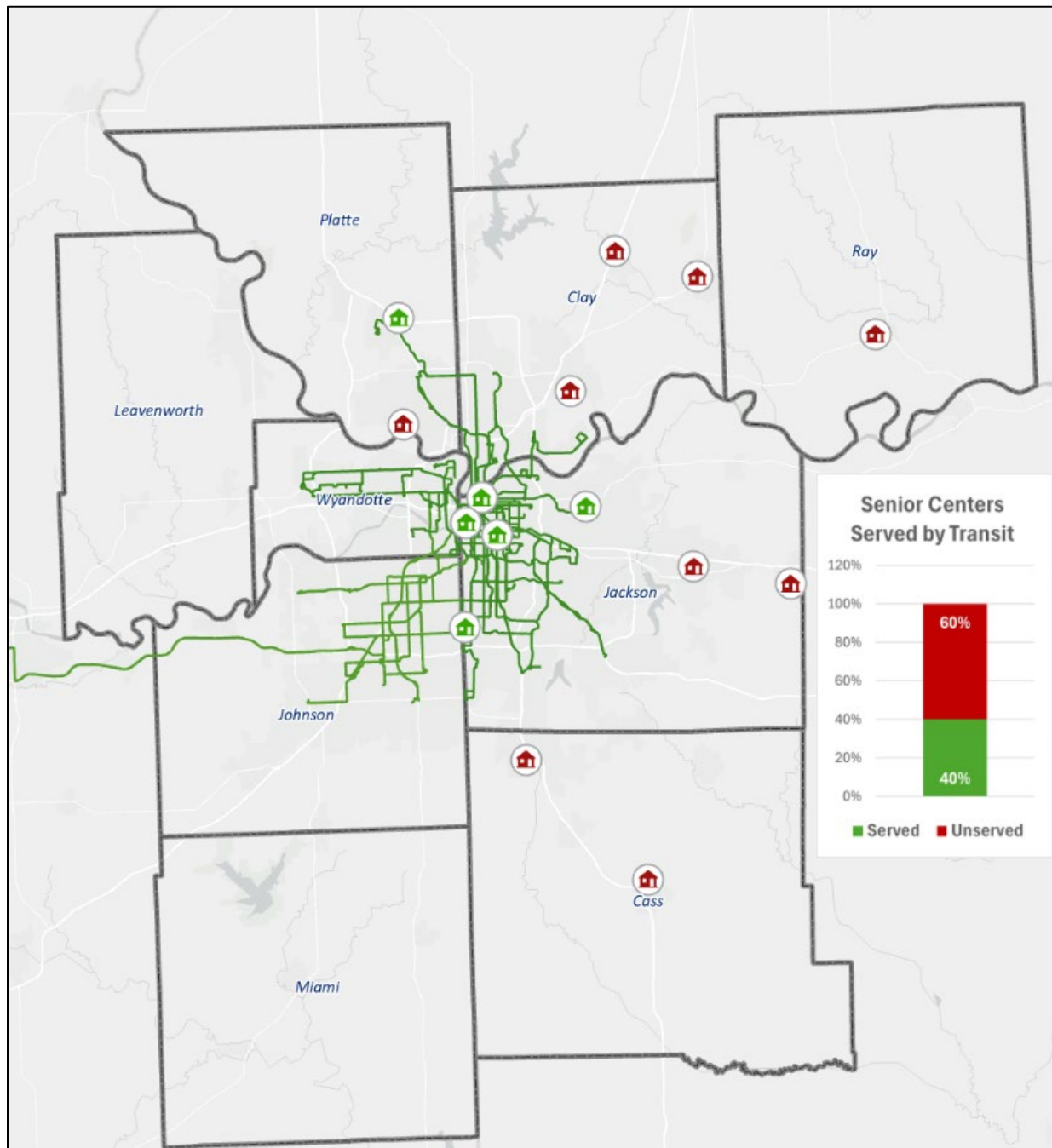
Source: MARC

Fixed-Route Transit

Transit service in the Kansas City region is provided by four primary transit agencies: the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Johnson County Transit (JCT), Unified Government Transportation (UGT), and the Kansas City Streetcar Authority (KCSA). These four agencies coordinate regionally to run service under the RideKC brand to present a cohesive system identifier to users. Of the agencies, KCATA is the largest entity with the highest ridership and operates the majority of the routes in the region primarily operating in the urban core and the Kansas City, Missouri city limits.

Collectively there are 48 bus routes and one streetcar route operating throughout the region, including two fast-and frequent routes that run every 15-20 minutes for most of the day, and six commuter/express only routes that operate at peak times. In accordance with ADA regulations, all routes are coupled with complementary paratransit service for qualified residents within three-quarters of a mile of a transit route, excluding the commuter/express services. A full catalogue of regional transit routes can be found in .

Nearly all 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 highway loop, transit access is either challenging or non-existent, except in central (and to a lesser degree, southwestern) Johnson County. Due to the low density development pattern, common in the areas outside the urban core, fixed-route transit struggles to serve these communities efficiently.

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

KCATA operates the vast majority of transit services in the region. This includes two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Lite routes (Troost MAX, Prospect MAX), 30 local bus routes, and one express route. KCATA also provides paratransit service, general public demand response service, and IRIS microtransit service. KCATA's service map is shown in Figure 13 below. KCATA currently contracts with 10 jurisdictions in the KC metro.

Figure 13 – KCATA Route Map
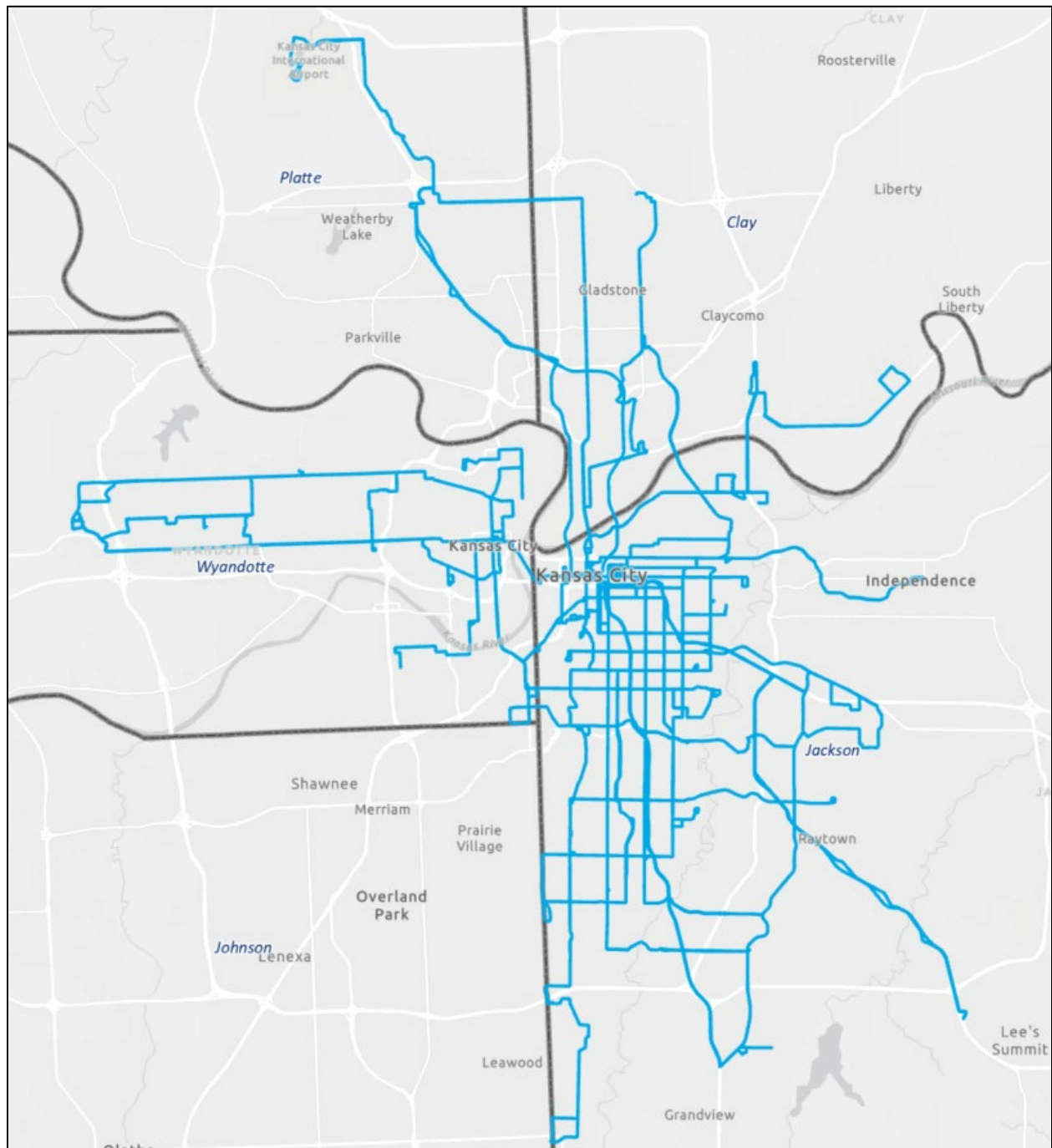
Source: KCATA 2025 GTFS Data

Johnson County Transit

Transit services in Johnson County, Kansas are provided by Johnson County Transit (JCT). JCT operates 11 commuter express routes in Johnson, Wyandotte, and Douglas counties in

Kansas and in Jackson County, Missouri. JCT Routes are shown in below. They also offer RideKC Freedom and Swift paratransit services, as well as microtransit. Unlike the Unified Government of Wyandotte County (UG) and the City of Independence, Johnson County does not contract with KCATA for KCATA-operated routes to serve Johnson County.

Figure 14 – Johnson County Transit Routes
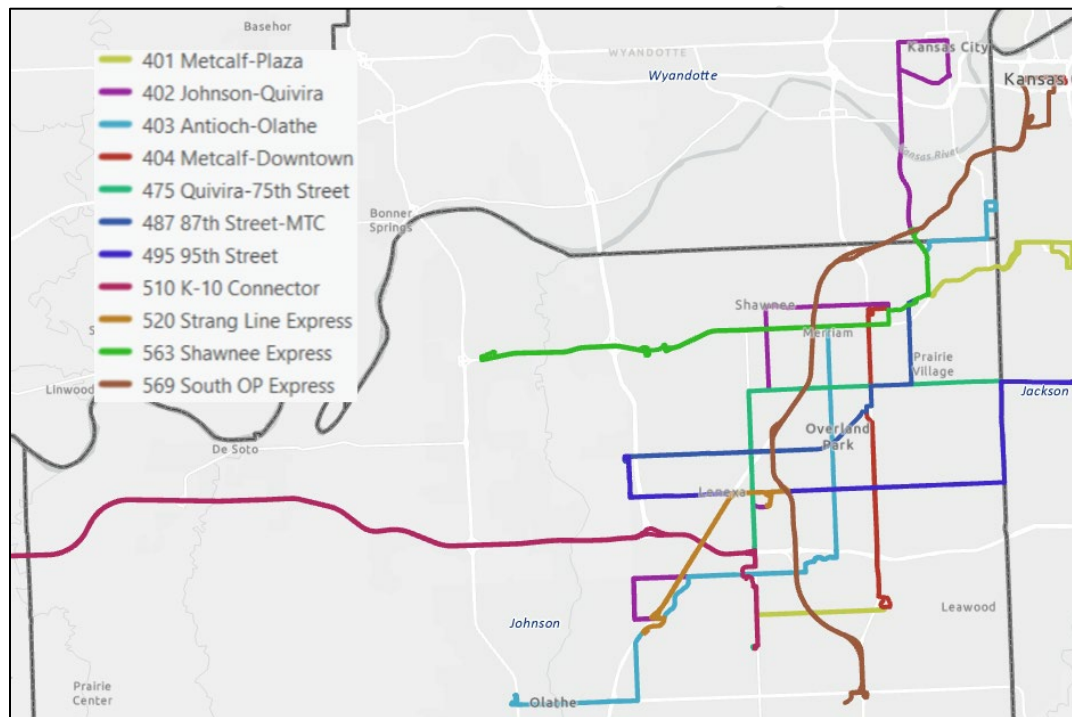
Source: JCT 2025 GTFS Data

Unified Government Transportation

Unified Government Transportation (UGT) provides additional transit services that operate within UG, as well as contracts with KCATA to operate routes that connect UG to the region. Services directly operated by UG include seven fixed bus routes, one micro transit service, and paratransit service. All routes serve one or both transit centers in UG, at 7th & Minnesota and 47th & State Avenue. UGT's fixed routes are shown in below. All UG-operated routes operate on weekdays only.

Figure 15 – Unified Government Transportation Transit Routes
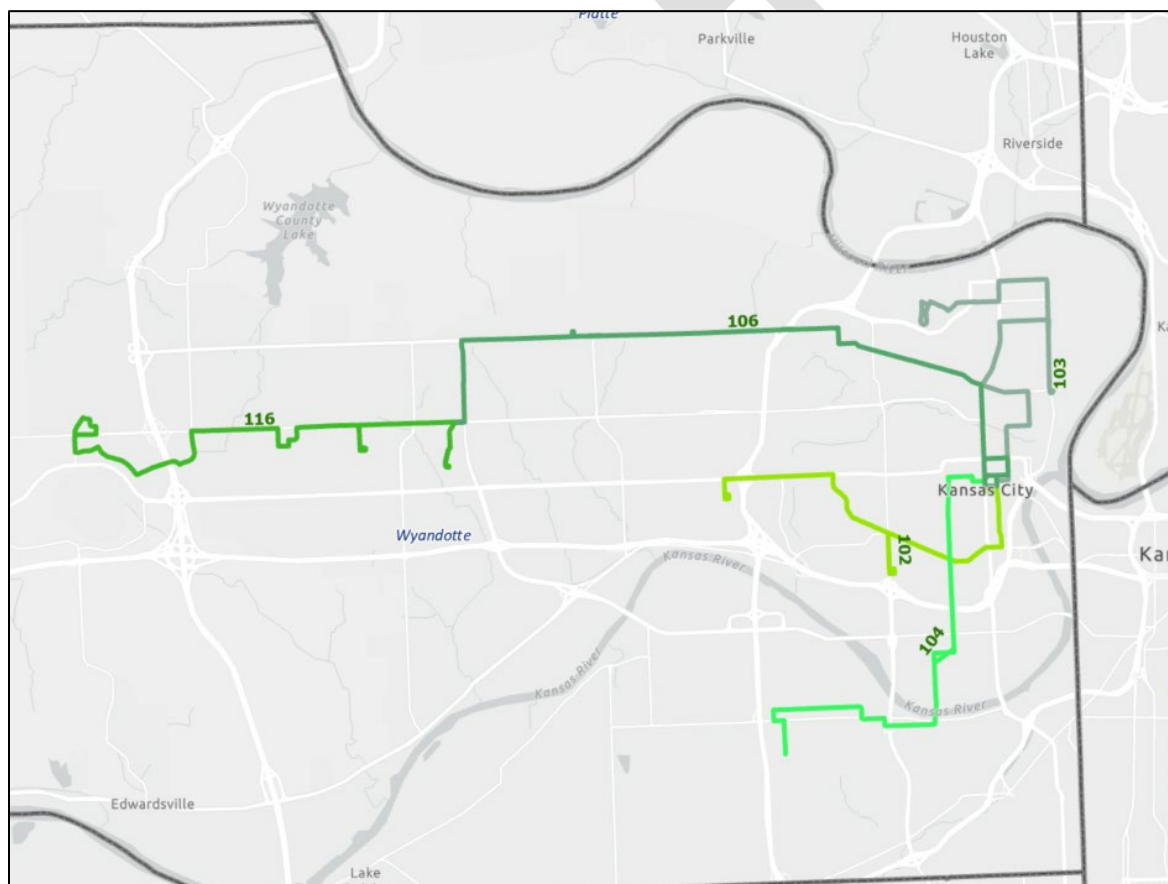
Source: Unified Government 2025 GTFS Data

Kansas City Streetcar Authority

The KC Streetcar route runs north-south along Main Street from River Market in the north to the Country Club Plaza and UMKC in the south. An extension from River Market to the Berkley Riverfront is scheduled to open in early 2026. The expanded streetcar route serves as a north-south spine in Kansas City, impacting how people use the greater transit network and transfer between modes.

Figure 16– KC Streetcar Route
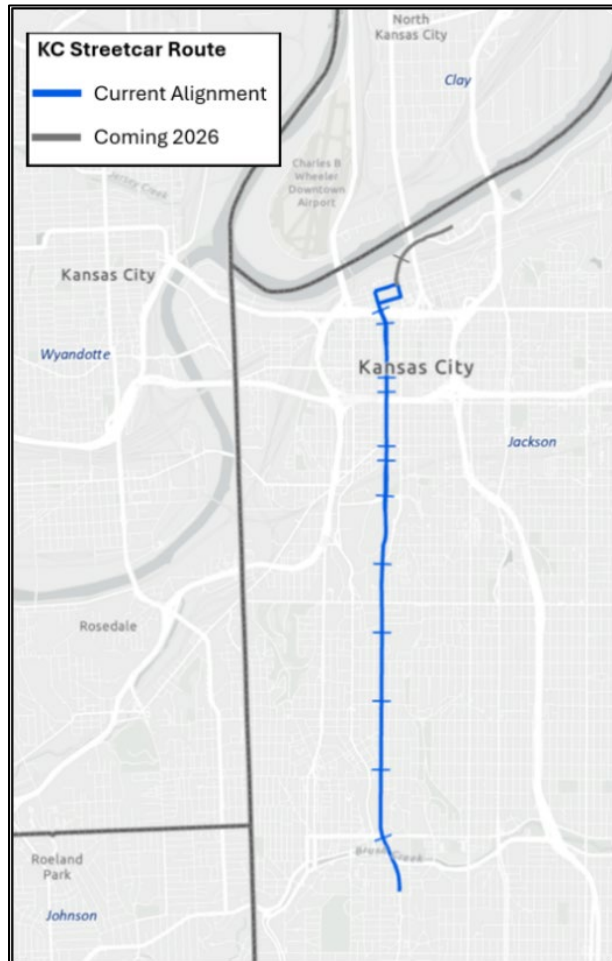
Source: KCATA 2025 GTFS Data

Service Times

Paratransit services are required to provide complimentary service within a ¾ mile radius of fixed route transit routes. Similarly, paratransit only provides service during the hours of fixed route transit operations. This means that if a transit route only operates during weekdays or service ends earlier than the rest of the transit system, paratransit services will also be unavailable. This underscores the importance of understanding the service times available to riders and the relationship between paratransit and fixed-route transit. RideKC generally defines their service times as listed below in Table 2. It should be noted these times vary slightly across each agency under the RideKC umbrella.

Table 2 – RideKC Service Times

Time Period	Hours
Morning Peak	6 – 9 a.m.
Midday Service	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Afternoon Peak	3 – 6 p.m.
Evening Service	6 -10 p.m.
Night Service	10 p.m. - 12 a.m.

Source: RideKC GTFS Data

Zero And Reduced Fare Programs

At present, all services operating under the RideKC umbrella are not collecting fares from passengers. The region has been zero-fare since March 19, 2020. The future of the zero-fare model is uncertain, and regional conversations are underway to decide if this model will continue or not. KSCA has stated that no matter the outcome of these discussions they aim to remain zero-fare for the foreseeable future.

Prior to the introduction of zero-fare, free and reduced fare types were in effect. They covered the following categories:

- Veterans
- Paratransit Riders
- Students
- Safety Net Clientele
- Low-income

Microtransit

IRIS

IRIS is an app-based rideshare service that was introduced to the Kansas City region in 2023 as part of an effort to fill in gaps in the fixed-route system and provide a more flexible demand-response style of service for riders. IRIS is operated under the RideKC brand in partnership with zTrip and RideCo. IRIS currently operates In Kansas City, Missouri, North Kansas City, parts of Wyandotte County, and Independence, Missouri. The future of IRIS regionally is uncertain, as several cities discontinued their services with IRIS and long-term funding remains in question.

GEST

GEST is a recent addition to the region's microtransit services. Similar to IRIS, GEST is an app-based rideshare service that utilizes electric golf cart style vehicles. They currently operate in Gladstone, Liberty, Parkville, and Riverside.

RideKC Freedom OnDemand

Originally developed to serve individuals with disabilities, this service is now available to the general public. It offers same-day, app-based ride scheduling with accessible vehicles and competitive fares, operating across much of the metro area.

199 Microtransit (Wyandotte County)

This service provides on-demand rides within Wyandotte County, including key destinations such as downtown Kansas City, Kansas, and the University of Kansas Medical Center (KU Med Center). It supports residents with flexible travel options and connections to fixed-route transit.

298 NKC Flex

While North Kansas City (NKC) Flex is technically part of IRIS, this service operates a different span of service (6 a.m. to 8 p.m.) than the other IRIS service areas (4 a.m. to 11 p.m.).

499 Microtransit (Johnson County)

Serving Johnson County, this microtransit option connects riders to major employment centers, shopping areas, and transit hubs. It is especially useful in suburban areas where fixed-route bus service is less frequent.

Bonner Springs On-Demand Service

Operated by Tiblow Transit, this service provides flexible transportation within the city limits of Bonner Springs, offering residents a convenient way to travel locally for errands, appointments, and connections to other transit options. It supports mobility in a suburban area where fixed-route bus service is limited.

RideLV (Leavenworth)

Operated by The Guidance Center, in partnership with KCATA, RideLV offers on-demand service within city limits, helping residents access local destinations and connect to regional transit options.

Lee's Summit On-Demand Service

This service, operated by OATS (Operating Above the Standard) transit, enables Lee's Summit residents to schedule rides within the city limits. It provides convenient access to key destinations such as shopping centers, medical facilities, and transit hubs, making it especially valuable for individuals without a personal vehicle or access to fixed-route transit.

ADA and ADA-Complementary Paratransit Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services are available for customers who are unable to use fixed-route bus and streetcar services due to their disability. This service is offered in the Kansas City, Missouri metro area, Wyandotte County, Kansas and Independence, Missouri, and Johnson County, Kansas. Federal regulations define the service area as being within 3/4 mile of a local fixed route when that route is in operation. A map of this 3/4-mile area is shown in Figure 17 – Regional Complimentary ADA ¾ Mile Fixed Route Transit Buffer.

Non-ADA Paratransit services are offered in Kansas City, Missouri, Wyandotte County, Kansas, Independence, Missouri and Johnson County, Kansas. Each area has its own residence requirement, service area and pricing. Below are some of the general guidelines:

Independence, Missouri | Kansas City, Missouri | Wyandotte County, Kansas - If you are 65 or older and/or have a disability and live in Independence, Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri or Wyandotte County, Kansas, you may be eligible for non-ADA RideKC Freedom service in these areas (called RideKC Freedom on Demand).

Johnson County, Kansas - If you are 65 or older, have a disability and live in Johnson County, Kansas, you may be eligible for Johnson County Transit's RideKC Freedom services and RideKC Freedom on Demand.

Figure 17 – Regional Complimentary ADA ¾ Mile Fixed Route Transit Buffer
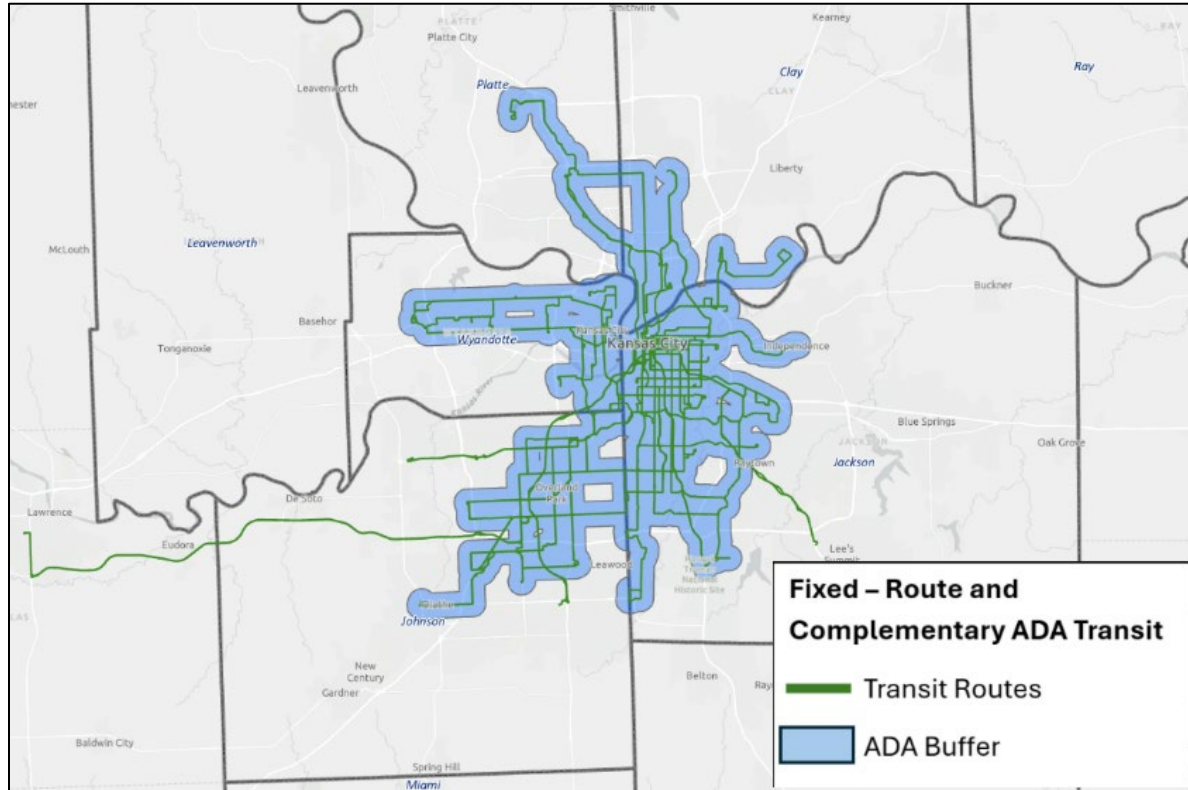
Source: RideKC 2025 GTFS Data

Below in Table 3 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 3 – List of Transit Agency Sponsored ADA Complementary and non-ADA Services

Service Name	Eligible User	Service Area	Operating Characteristics
RideKC Freedom (Kansas City, Missouri, Independence, and Wyandotte County)	Must be approved through the ADA eligibility process. Eligibility is specific to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	ADA paratransit service provided within ¾ mile of local fixed-route bus and streetcar service	Operating hours mirror the hours of adjacent fixed-route transit service. Advanced reservations are required
RideKC Freedom (Johnson County)	Must be approved through the eligibility process. Riders must meet one of the	Non-ADA paratransit service provided throughout Johnson County,	Operating hours are generally Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Trip

Service Name	Eligible User	Service Area	Operating Characteristics
	following criteria: documented disability, age 65 or older, or meet income requirements for reduced-fare programs	with limited regional connections to Kansas City, Missouri, and Wyandotte County	reservations are required in advance
Johnson County SWIFT	Only available to Johnson County Developmental Support clients	Johnson County	Provides transportation services for Johnson County Developmental Support clients to employment sites, training programs, and sheltered workshops
RideKC Freedom On-Demand	Open to the general public. Discounted fares are available for ADA-certified and eligible RideKC Freedom users	Service area includes Kansas City, Missouri; Independence, Missouri; Wyandotte County, Kansas; and Johnson County, Kansas	App-based, on-demand shared-ride service. Same-day booking is available. Operating hours vary by day, generally from early morning to late evening

Human Service Transportation Services

County and Municipal Programs

Counties and municipalities across the Kansas City region play a critical role in supporting transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income residents. These programs typically operate demand-response or specialized transportation services within local jurisdictions and often serve residents who may not qualify for ADA paratransit or who live outside fixed-route service areas.

Many county and municipal programs are designed to support essential trips such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, social services, employment, and senior nutrition programs. These services are commonly funded through a combination of local

government revenues, federal and state grants. Some programs operate their own fleets, while others contract with private providers or non-profit organizations.

Transit Agency Programs

Regional transit agencies provide several specialized transportation programs beyond traditional fixed-route service to support mobility for transportation-disadvantaged populations. These programs include ADA complementary paratransit, non-ADA paratransit, microtransit, and demand-response services that improve flexibility and access for riders who cannot reliably use fixed-route transit.

KCATA, JCT, UGT, and other RideKC partners operate a range of programs such as RideKC Freedom, RideKC Freedom OnDemand, IRIS, Swift, IndeAccess, and county-operated microtransit services. These services provide door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation for eligible riders, including older adults and individuals with disabilities, often at reduced or subsidized fares.

These programs are funded through a combination of FTA Section 5310 funds, local government contributions, Medicaid and VA reimbursements, and operating revenues. While transit agency programs provide essential mobility for thousands of residents, many providers face challenges related to staffing shortages, vehicle availability, funding stability, and service-hour limitations, which is something that was mentioned in previous workshops and stated in many responses in the provider survey. Coordination among agencies remains critical to minimizing duplication and ensuring that services are delivered efficiently across jurisdictional boundaries.

Aging Agency Programs

Aging agencies across the region play an important role in helping older adults remain mobile and connected to essential services. Through funding from the Older Americans Act (OAA), state programs, and local matching funds, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) support transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping, senior centers, and nutrition programs.

Services are provided through contracted transportation providers, volunteer driver programs, and senior or community-based vans, often serving older adults with limited incomes, mobility challenges, or no access to a personal vehicle. As the region's older adult population continues to grow, demand for these services is increasing, while agencies face challenges related to funding, rising costs, and driver availability.

Human Service Transportation Service Origin-Destination Data

To better understand travel patterns in the region, MARC staff gathered origin/destination (OD) data. Replica was used to source the data in the maps that follow. Replica is a third-party web-based software company that ingests various data sets and acts as a data library and mapping tool. With that data, we can map the home locations per square mile and top destinations per square mile for people in the Kansas City area. The data used for the maps below is for travelers over the age of 65 with one car or less.

Origin Data

The map below in Figure 18 shows the origins of trips taken by people in the Kansas City region over the age of 65 who own one car or less. The map indicates that most residents in this category live inside the I-435/I-470/MO-291 highway loop. The majority of these residents live in south Kansas City, Missouri and northeast and central Johnson County.

Figure 18 – Origin of Trips from One Car Households Over Age 65
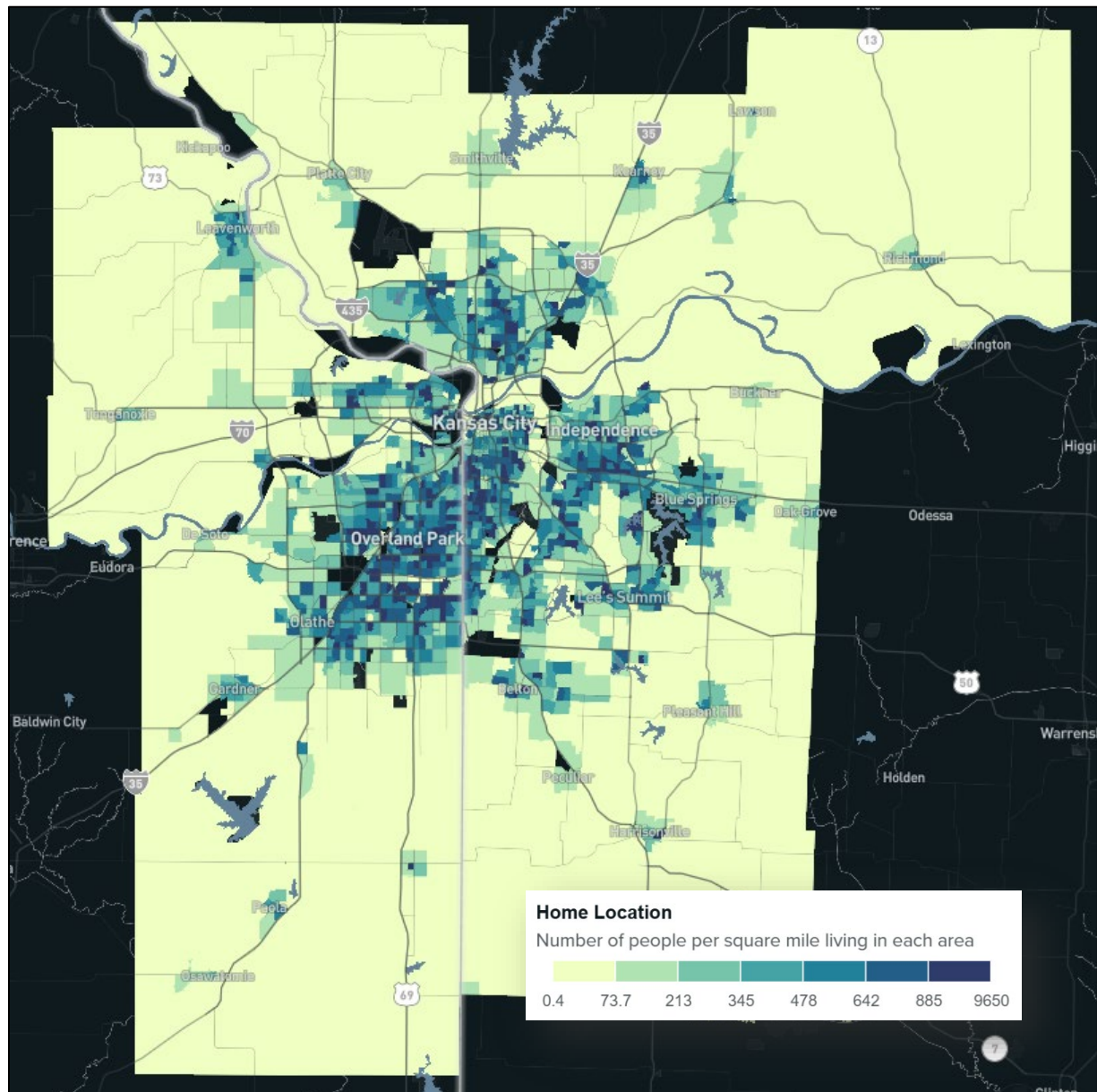
Source: Replica, Spring 2025 Dataset, Block Group Level

Destination Data

The destination data map in Figure 19 below shows where the trips mentioned above terminate. Most travelers end their trips in the urban areas of the Kansas City Region, like central Kansas City, Missouri, and Overland Park. Most cities on the map have a hotspot in their centers.

Figure 19 – Destination of Trips from One Car Households Over Age 65
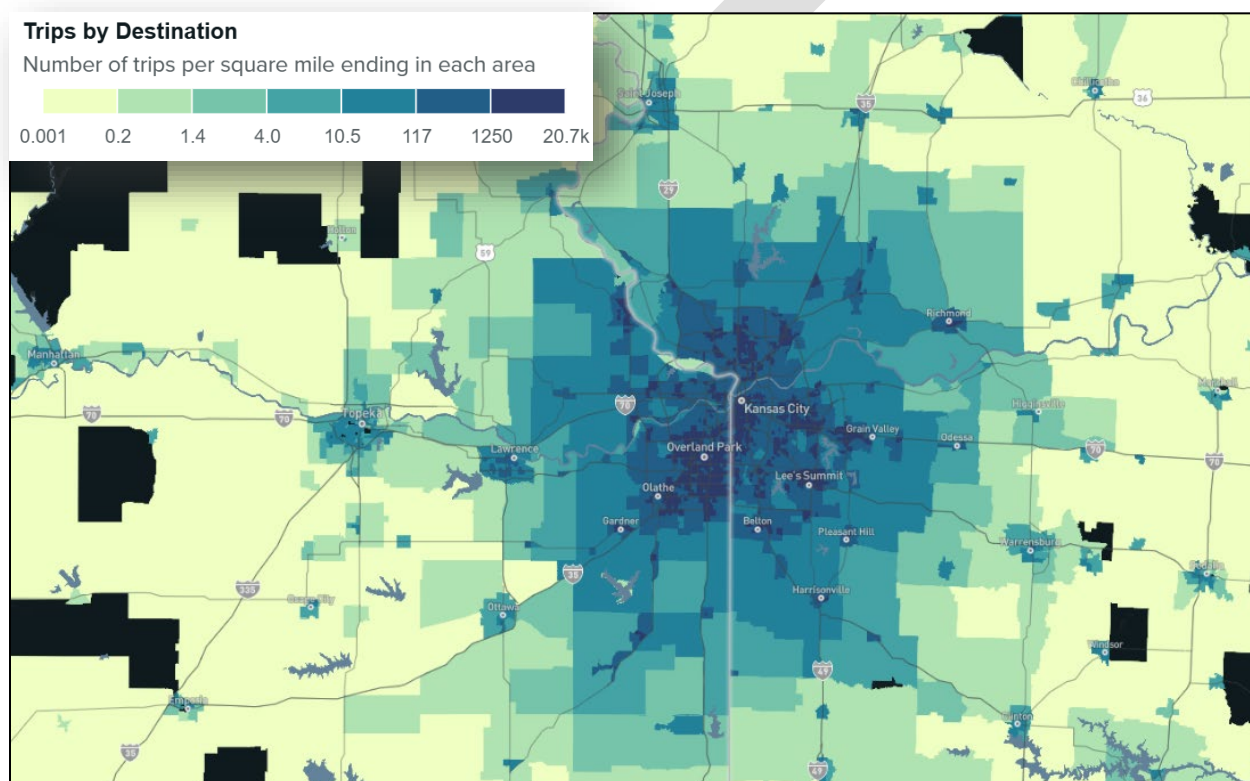
Source: Replica, Spring 2025 Dataset, Block Group Level

3: Public Outreach

Methodology

Consistent with the goals outlined in MARC's Public Participation Plan[4] (PPP), the public outreach process for the Coordinated Plan included a variety of outreach activities to inform the public about the plan as well as shape the plan itself. The outreach process included in-person and online engagement through committees and public workshops, rider and provider surveys, as well as social media posts to raise awareness.

All outreach materials were provided in English as well as Spanish, with other language translations available upon request (though none were requested). Workshops where individuals with hearing loss or hearing impairment were present had American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters to translate what was said, and each workshop had a sound system for amplifying speakers to ensure all participants with hearing impairment or deaf individuals could clearly understand what was being said. Insights were also drawn from engagement conducted by other planning efforts, namely Connected KC 2050 (CKC 2050, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the region) and the Transportation Resiliency KC Plan. The sections that follow go into more detail for each engagement category.

In-Person Public Engagement

Regional data and maps can only get us so far in our analysis; in-person engagement adds another dimension to our understanding. Engaging directly with organization staff, patients, and riders adds the qualitative, human context that grounds the data in personal experiences and may reveal trends the data misses.

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[4] Public Participation Plan, MARC Transportation Department, December 2023

Figure 20 – Public Workshop at The Whole Person

Source: The Whole Person

Locations

To engage on that deeper level and better connect with these populations, MARC conducted a series of three in-person workshops at locations around the region, with an approximate total attendance of 50 to 60 people. These workshops were held at the following locations, each serving a segment of the population that the Coordinated Plan aims to better understand.

- **Ability KC:** A comprehensive outpatient medical rehabilitation facility that serves people with a wide range of disabilities. Reliable transportation is essential for getting patients to and from their appointments.
- **The Whole Person:** An organization that aims to help individuals with disabilities to live independently by supporting their ability to secure housing, transportation, and employment opportunities.
- **Alphapointe:** One of the Kansas City region's largest organizations dedicated to

serving people with vision loss and low vision individuals, they help provide employment and job training opportunities and rehabilitation services. Navigating transportation can be particularly challenging for people with vision loss.

Findings and Key Insights

Conversations covered a wide range of topics and experiences, but several key trends emerged.

- Riders don't have access to easy-to-understand information, especially blind users.
- Changes to the system can come as a surprise and leave transit dependent people stuck if they purchased or leased a home or apartment based on transit access.
- Riders with disabilities feel deprioritized by changes to paratransit service combining with on-demand service.

Public Survey

A public survey was conducted between late August and the end of October. During that time, two-hundred and sixty-five (265) responses were collected both electronically and via printed survey forms. The survey was circulated by MAC members to their contact lists as well as transportation service providers, senior homes, disability advocacy organizations, and neighborhood groups like the Center for Neighborhoods (CFN) at UMKC. Ads were also run on social media to boost reach.

Location And Demographics

Those who took the survey across the region were asked which city they lived in as a required question. While most respondents answered they lived in Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas City, Kansas, and Independence, there was at least one response from most cities.

Figure 21 – Percentage of Respondents by City
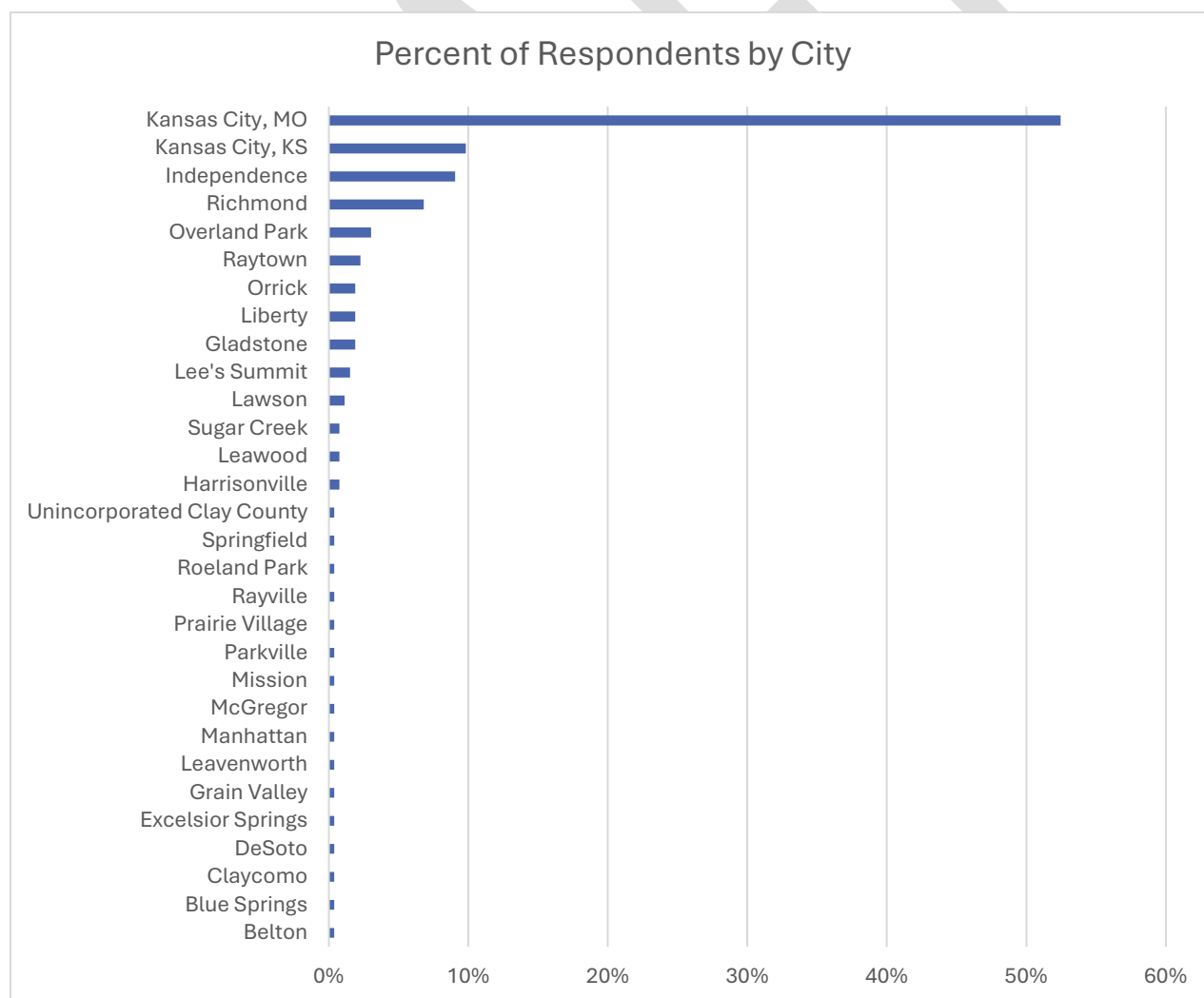
The majority of respondents were over 45 years of age, with 32% between ages 45 and 64, 26% between ages 64 and 84, and 3% were 85 years of age or older. The 25-44 year old cohort was also significant, with 21% of respondents.

Figure 22 – Age of Respondents
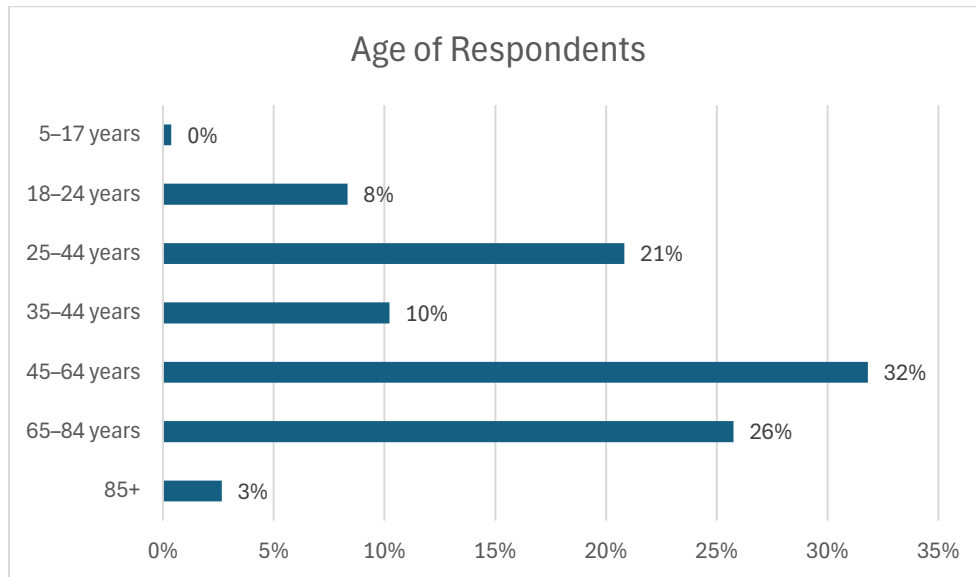
Income Disparities

Most respondents were on the lower end of the household income scale, with 49% reporting making less than $25,000 annually. The second largest bracket was between $25,000 and $49,000 annually, with 27% of respondents.

Figure 23 – Annual Household Income

Annual Household Income

Income Bracket	Percentage
Under $25,000	49%
$25,000 to $49,000	27%
$50,000 to $74,000	9%
$75,000 to $99,000	2%
$100,000 to $149,000	3%
Over $150,000	1%
Prefer not to say	9%
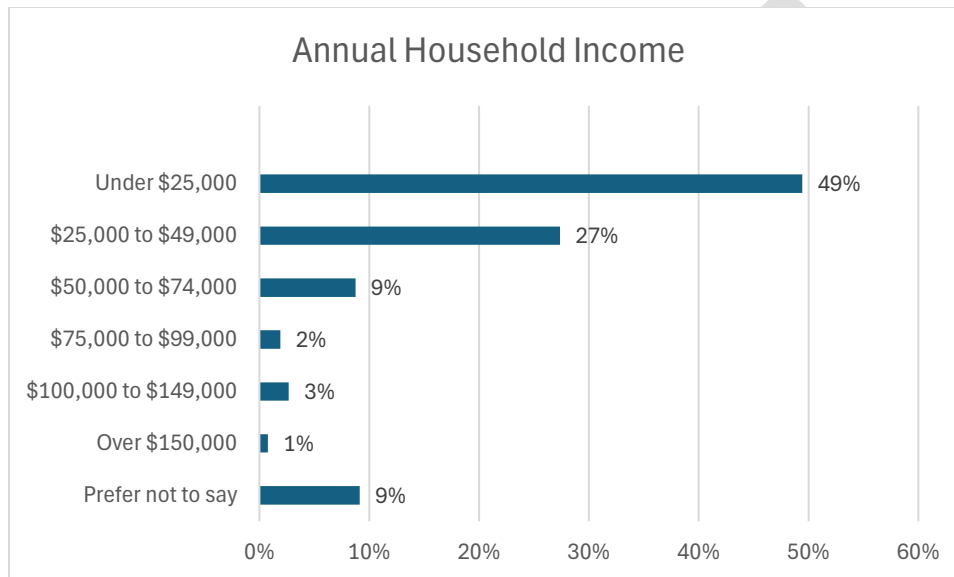
ADA Awareness

When asked, the majority (61%) of respondents reported that they did not have a disability, as shown in Figure 24. According to the survey question, a disability was defined as an ambulatory disability, visual impairment, cognitive disability, intellectual disability, or self-care disability. Of those that reported having a disability, the majority stated they had an ambulatory disability (40%), as shown in Figure 25. Respondents could select as many disabilities as applied to them.

Figure 24 – Percent of Respondents with a Disability

Percent of Respondents with a Disability

39%
61%

■ Yes ■ No
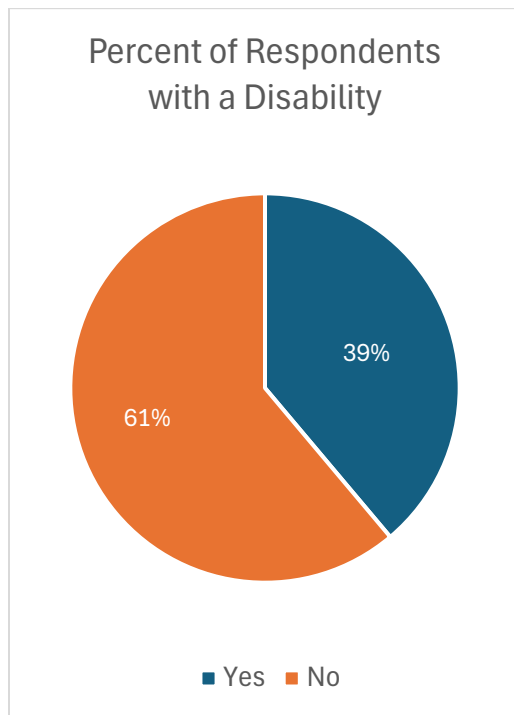
Figure 25 – Disabilities Reported by Respondents

Percent of Respondents With Each Disability Type

Disability Type	Percent
Ambulatory Disability (difficulty walking or climbing stairs)	40%
Visual impairment (difficulty seeing, even with corrective lenses/contacts)	21%
Cognitive disability (difficulty remembering, concentrating or making decisions)	17%
Intellectual disability (difficulties learning, problem solving, adapting to daily life and social interactions)	13%
Self-care disability (difficulty going day to day tasks such as bathing or dressing	9%

User Satisfaction with Existing Service

As part of the survey respondents were asked to what degree they agreed or disagreed with the following questions on a scale of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, or not applicable to me. The approximate percentage trends for each are listed below as positive or negative.

- "I can get where I need to go at any time of the day."
  - **Negative sentiment was highest at 48%,** positive sentiment at 37%, and neutral sentiment at 15%.
- "I can get where I need to go any day of the week."
  - **Negative sentiment was highest at 55%,** positive sentiment at 28%, and neutral sentiment at 17%.
- "I can get where I need to go on time, reliably."
  - **Negative sentiment was highest at 43%,** positive sentiment at 38%, and neutral sentiment at 19%.
- "I can get where I need to go, no matter where it is."
  - **Negative sentiment was highest at 59%,** positive sentiment at 26%, and neutral sentiment at 15%.
- "I know and trust my driver(s)."
  - **Positive sentiment was highest at 48%,** neutral sentiment at 35%, and negative sentiment at 17%.
- "I always know about changes to my transportation service before they happen."
  - **Negative sentiment was highest at 48%,** neutral sentiment at 20%, and neutral sentiment at 16%.

- "My transportation is an affordable part of my budget."
  - **Positive sentiment was highest at 57%,** neutral sentiment at 22%, and negative sentiment at 21%.
- "I have many different options for getting around."
  - **Negative sentiment was highest at 50%**, positive sentiment at 30%, and neutral sentiment at 20%.
- "My transportation provider(s) is adaptive to my needs."
  - **Positive sentiment was highest at 40%,** negative sentiment at 36%, and neutral sentiment at 24%.

Mode Usage

Respondents were asked to choose from a number of transportation mode choices. The options presented were rideshare (IRIS, Uber, Lyft, etc.), personal vehicle (whether you drive or a family member or friend drives you), walking, paratransit services, taxis, volunteer services, biking, or a private van service (church van, senior center van, etc.). Respondents were instructed to select all that apply.

The top modes chosen were rideshare at 24%, personal vehicle at 23%, walking at 21%, and paratransit at 17%. Taxis, volunteer services, biking, and private van all came in under 5% each.

Figure 26 – Transportation Modes Used by Respondents
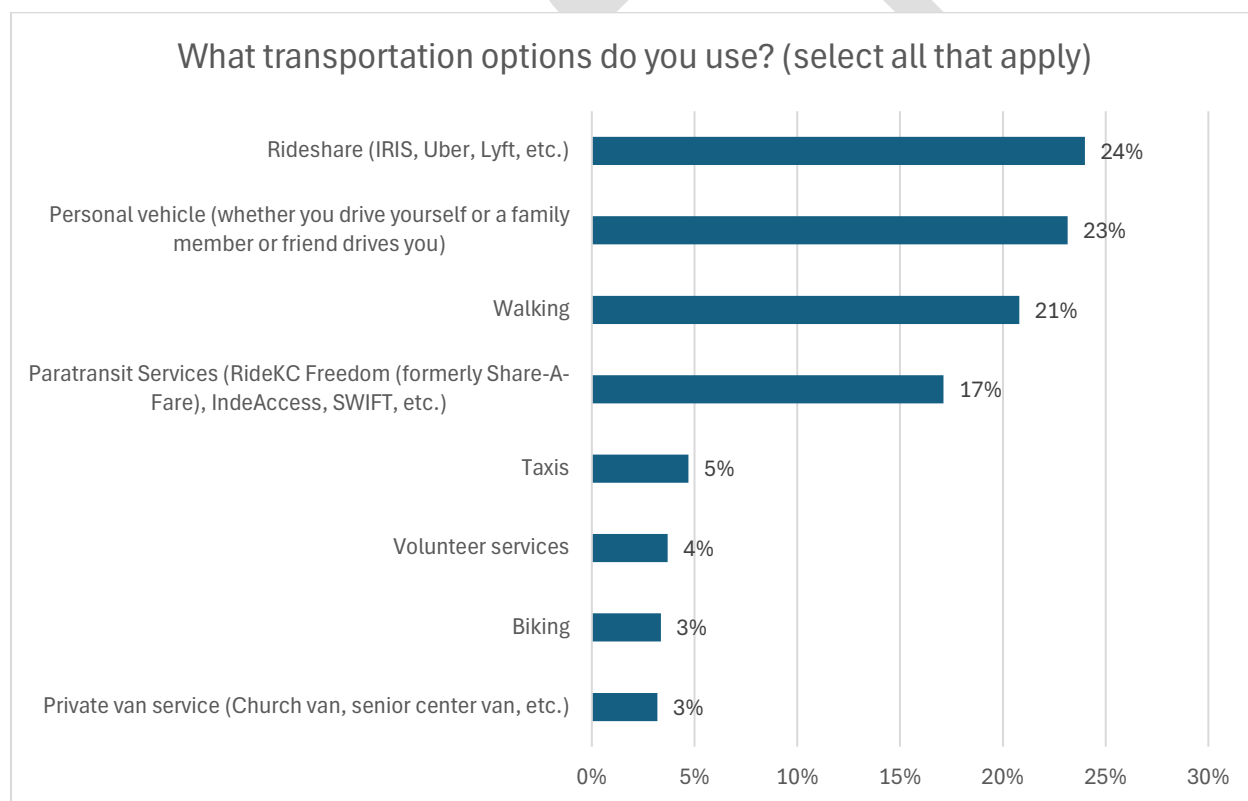
Desired Destinations

OD data is good for getting larger travel trends geographically but doesn't provide specific insights on a human scale. Survey respondents were asked "What specific places in the Kansas City region should specialized transportation be expanded?" The following lists the top 10 location categories respondents mentioned in their answers.

1. Grocery Stores and Essential Shopping: The most frequently mentioned stores specifically were Walmart, Price Chopper, Aldi, Sam's Club, Harps, Apple Market,

and Hy-Vee.

2. Medical and Healthcare Appointments: Unsurprisingly healthcare was often cited, specifically doctor's offices, hospitals (especially VA hospitals, KU Med Center), dialysis centers, labs, physical therapy, dental clinics, and pharmacies. These are critical, non-discretionary trips that are often hindered by a lack of direct or reliable service.

3. Employment and Job Centers: Specific areas mentioned included industrial areas, manufacturing hubs in Kansas/Missouri, Olathe, Lenexa, Overland Park, Liberty (Amazon), and North Kansas City. Lack of service to major employment hubs, especially in the suburbs and across state lines, directly impacts earning potential.

4. Family, Friends and Social Visits: In addition to day-to-day trips as mentioned above, many respondents mentioned a desire for visiting family homes, friends' houses, and relatives in suburbs like Lee's Summit, Blue Springs, Independence, and Gladstone. Transportation barriers contribute to social isolation, preventing visits to loved ones.

5. Suburban Centers and Retail: Respondents mentioned Independence (specifically the mall), Lee's Summit, Blue Springs, Overland Park, Gladstone, Raytown, and Grandview. There was a general theme of being cut off from neighboring cities and their commercial/retail centers due to reduced or non-existent cross-regional routes.

6. Entertainment and Community Life: Recreational opportunities were mentioned often, with respondents expressing a desire to go to movies, restaurants, the zoo, Starlight Theatre, Crown Center, the Plaza, museums, parks, lakes, Chiefs games, and community centers. Lack of evening/weekend service and poor connections limit access to recreation and cultural activities, reducing quality of life.

7. Essential Services and Daily Errands: These included banks, post offices, laundromats, libraries, and government offices (Social Security Administration (SSA), courts, probation). These errands become major obstacles.

8. Educational and Religious Institutions: Churches (frequently mentioned), community colleges (specifically Johnson County Community College (JCCC) and Metropolitan Community College (MCC)), and the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC). These requests highlight the need for weekend service (for worship) and reliable service to higher education.

9. Regional and Long-Distance Travel: Respondents expressed interest in traveling to KCI airport, St. Joseph, Lawrence, and out-of-state travel. The airport is repeatedly cited as poorly connected, having only one hourly fixed-route connection. Desire for connections to nearby cities highlights the lack of a regional network.

10. Specific High-Demand Corridors: North Kansas City, 23rd Street in Kansas City Missouri/Independence, North Oak Trafficway (Gladstone), and the former 106 Route in KCK. These are repeatedly mentioned as critical corridors where service has been cut or is insufficient.

Smartphone Ownership and Usage

Smartphones and cell phones have become widespread; no respondents reported not owning a cell phone or smartphone. As shown in Figure 27, 92% of respondents said they have a smartphone (cell phone with internet access), while the remaining 8% said they have a cell phone that does not have internet access (calls/texts only). Respondents were then asked how often they used a cell phone for trip planning; most respondents (64%) use their cell phone for trip planning daily, shown in Figure 28.

Figure 27 – Cell Phone Ownership

Do you own a cell phone?

8%

92%

■ Cell phone without internet access, calls only
■ Cell phone with internet access (smartphone)
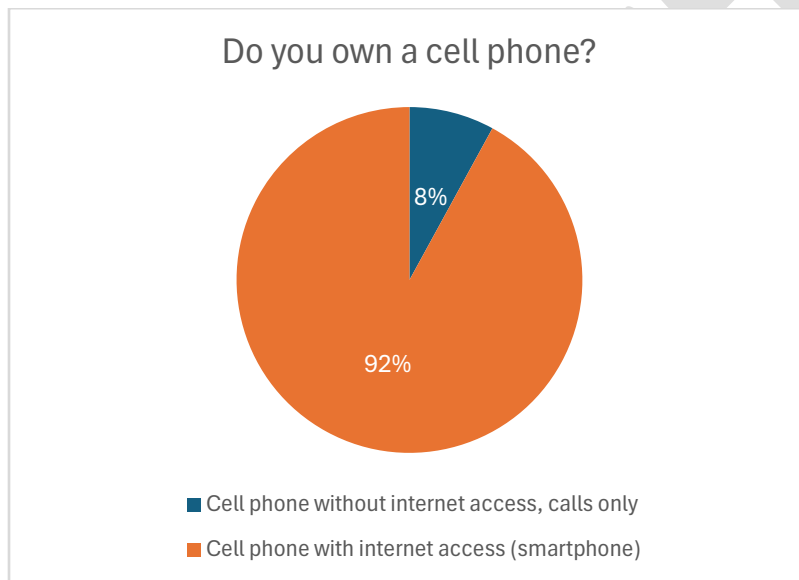
Figure 28 – Cell Phone Utilization for Transportation

How often do you use smart phone apps for transportation information, trip planning, and/or wayfinding?

19%
17%
64%

- Rarely (less than once a week)
- Every trip
- Some trips (2 or more times a week)
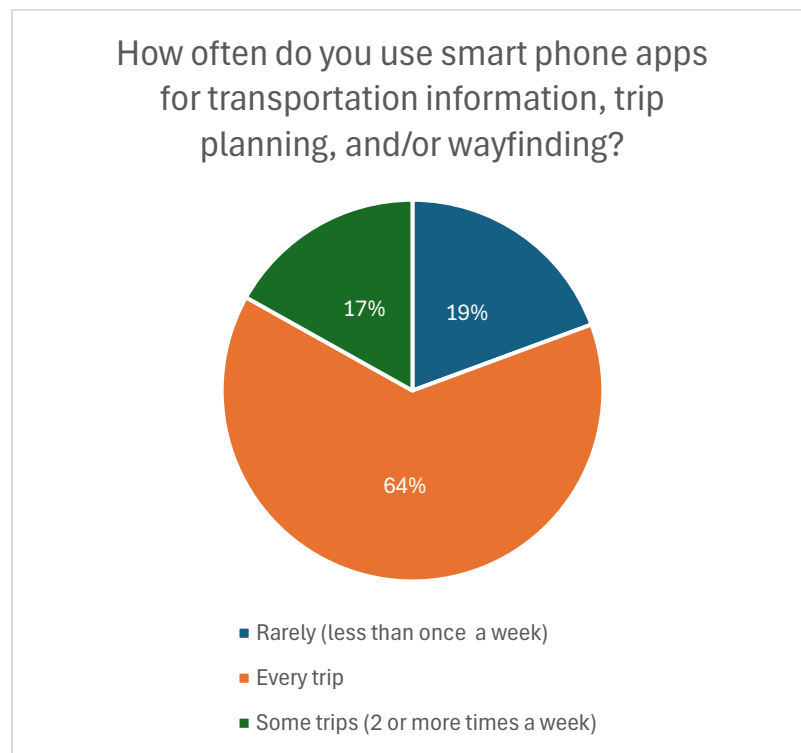
Open-Ended Responses

The following are summaries of the key trends that emerged for the two main open-ended questions: what is your biggest obstacle, and what else would you like to tell us?

What is your biggest obstacle to using the existing transportation services available?

- Cost and Affordability:
  - The most frequently cited barrier, especially for those on fixed or low incomes.
  - High expenses for rideshare services (Uber/Lyft) create financial strain.
  - Many respondents reported choosing not to travel due to cost.
- Limited Service Availability/Coverage:
  - Major gaps in service areas, particularly in suburban and outlying regions (e.g., Raytown, Grandview, Gladstone, Lees Summit, and parts of Independence).
  - Lack of routes to essential destinations like workplaces, medical facilities, Walmart, and KCI airport. Paratransit and IRIS services often do not serve needed areas or have restrictive boundaries.

- Unreliable and Infrequent Service:
    - Despite KCATA's statistically above average on time performance, buses were cited as frequently late, sometimes not showing at all, especially on weekends, evenings, and holidays. Long wait times along routes with hourly service and in some cases poor transfer coordination cause missed connections and long end to end travel times.
    - Last-minute cancellations and schedule changes without notification.
- Inadequate Accessibility for Disabled and Older Adults:
    - Physical barriers: lack of sidewalks, benches, shelters, and long walking distances to stops.
    - Vehicles don't always accommodate wheelchairs or walkers properly; drivers were reported as sometimes untrained in assisting disabled riders.
    - Services are effectively unavailable for those who cannot walk to stops or wait outdoors in extreme weather.
- Communication and Scheduling Challenges:
    - Respondents expressed difficulty booking rides, especially for same-day or weekend trips. Respondents said apps and schedules were often inaccurate and buses may not stop at posted locations. Inflexible advance-booking requirements (e.g., 2-day notice) don't suit dynamic needs like medical appointments.
- Operational Hours and Weekend/Holiday Gaps:
    - Limited or no service on Sundays, holidays, and outside typical business hours (e.g., after 6 p.m.). This restricts access to jobs, worship, family visits, and essential errands.
- Notable geographic and demographic pain points included Wyandotte and Jackson Counties, as they face higher concentrations of poverty and personal vehicle scarcity, amplifying these issues. Suburban residents feel particularly underserved, with few transit options.

What else would you like to tell us about transportation services in the Kansas City region, and how to improve them?

- Expand Service Coverage and Restore Routes
    - Reinstate eliminated routes (namely in Independence and Gladstone) and expand geographic coverage to underserved suburbs like Lee's Summit, Belton, Raytown, and Overland Park.
    - Improve connections to job centers, airports, and essential retail (e.g., Walmart, Hy-Vee).
- Increase Frequency, Reliability and Service Hours

- o Increase frequency from hourly to every 30 minutes or less to reduce missed connections and long waits.
  - o Extend operating hours into evenings, early mornings, weekends, and holidays to serve shift workers and enable social/errand trips. Improve schedule adherence and ensure real-time updates are accurate.
- Improve Accessibility and Physical Infrastructure
  - o Make buses and stops more accessible for seniors and people with disabilities (wheelchair securement, driver assistance). Add benches, shelters, and weather protection at stops.
  - o Ensure cleanliness and sanitation on vehicles. Improve sidewalks and crosswalks for safe access to stops.
- Ensure Affordability
  - o There was strong support to keep fares free or very low-cost, recognizing riders' limited incomes.
  - o Improve communication and accessibility of zero-cost programs and eligibility information.
  - o Address perceived inequity in service cuts for lower-income areas.
- Modernize Technology and Customer Service
  - o Develop a reliable, user-friendly app for scheduling, real-time tracking, and trip planning. Improve customer service and complaint resolution processes; ensure calls are returned.
  - o Provide clear, accessible information for non-tech-savvy users.
- Secure Regional Funding and Strategic Vision
  - o Establish a dedicated, sustainable regional funding source. Foster cross-jurisdictional cooperation to create a truly regional system.
  - o Invest in long-term infrastructure like expanded rail/streetcar lines and bike-share networks.
  - o Learn from other peer region metro models (Minneapolis was mentioned) for funding and service design.
- Overall, the responses reveal a community deeply reliant on transit but frustrated by service cuts, perceived inconsistency, and safety concerns. While many have good relationships with individual drivers and appreciate the value of free fares, there is a desire for a reliable, comprehensive, and regionally unified system that connects people to opportunity and essential services.

Survey Summary and Insights

Demographically, respondents are heavily transit-reliant, with nearly half (49%) reporting household incomes below $25,000. 61% are over age 45, including 29% who are 65 or

older, and 39% report having a disability, the most commonly being an ambulatory disability. User satisfaction was generally negative, with notable positive exceptions regarding driver relationships, service affordability (for public transportation), and service adaptability. Cost was a frequently cited barrier (for private service providers) particularly for rideshare like Uber and Lyft, forcing difficult choices between travel and other essentials.

Geographic isolation, due to major service gaps in suburban and outlying areas that have lost transit service in places like Independence, Lee's Summit, and Gladstone, cuts people off from jobs and services. Infrequent fixed-route service, missed connections, and last-minute cancellations require riders to plan their trips ahead of time and limit their spontaneity. In many places, the lack of sidewalks, shelters, and wheelchair-accessible vehicles makes travel particularly difficult for seniors and people with disabilities. Limited-service hours, especially during evenings, weekends, and holidays restrict access to work, healthcare, worship, and social life.

The open-ended questions yielded good insights into what riders are looking for. Riders mentioned expanding and restoring transit routes, particularly in Independence and Kansas City, Kansas, and extending coverage to underserved suburbs and job centers. There are also calls to increase frequency, moving from hourly to half-hourly service, and to extend operating hours into nights and weekends. Improving passenger amenities like benches, shelters, and real-time signage at stops is also a priority, as is modernizing operations with a reliable trip-planning app and easy and accessible customer service support. Respondents emphasize the need to maintain free or low-cost fares and to ensure all services are fully accessible.

The path forward requires the region to invest in a more robust, frequent, and integrated regional network. Success depends on reversing service cuts, improving operational reliability, and tailoring services to the needs of low-income, senior, and disabled residents who rely on these services.

Committee Engagement

Three regional MARC committees that handle transportation topics were engaged extensively throughout the planning process. These committees were the Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC), Transit Technical Team coordinating staff, and the Total Transportation Policy Committee (TTPC). Each body was made aware of the plan, the objectives, and general timeline they could expect for completion. Input was solicited primarily from the MAC and to a lesser degree the RTCC, while TTPC received informational updates.

It should be noted that the MARC committee structure is in the process of being reformatted. Pending approval, their would be a new transportation committee, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). There would also be a new Transit Roundtable, a public forum for transit discussion and presentations from local planners and officials.

Mobility Advisory Committee

The MAC is the primary body that was engaged with for this plan, and is made up of transportation providers, local government authorities, underserved populations, funders and other service providers. The MAC is responsible for the evaluation and selection of FTA Section 5310 funds in conjunction with MARC and KCATA. The MAC has meetings every quarter, with special sessions convened on an as needed basis typically no more than twice a year. The MAC was a crucial avenue for the distribution of the public survey and was also given a provider survey to provide insights into challenges service operators face.

Transit Technical Team Coordinating Staff

The Transit Technical Team is a body composed of representatives from transit providers across the region, state departments of transportation, community partners, and other interested parties. The aim of the Transit Technical Team is to provide a space to discuss the region's transit needs on a technical level, and as such this is not a public body. The Transit Technical Team was engaged twice throughout the outreach process, to maintain awareness of the plan and the update, and to provide feedback on the public survey.

Total Transportation Policy Committee

TTPC is the body that sets transportation policy at the regional level. It is composed of elected and unelected officials at the federal, state, and local levels. TTPC was engaged with to be made aware of the plan and progress on the plan, as well as plan adoption before it moves to the MARC and KCATA Boards.

Insights from Other Plans

A review of MARC's Transportation Resiliency Plan revealed survey and community feedback that offer valuable insights relevant to this Coordinated Plan. The feedback was gathered through questionnaires distributed to representatives from several local and regional organizations, including Cross-Lines, BikeWalkKC, the National Federation of the Blind, New Growth Transit, and The Whole Person. Each of these organizations works directly with individuals with disabilities and older adults, providing an informed perspective on the daily mobility challenges faced by these populations.

When participants were asked about the biggest transportation challenges in their communities, one common issue emerged: inconsistent and last-minute transit

communication. This concern encompasses a range of related problems stemming from inadequate or delayed information sharing. Respondents noted frequent missed rides to medical appointments, school, and work due to strained communication between riders and providers. Individuals without access to cell phones or the internet were especially vulnerable, as they often did not receive notifications about route changes, severe weather cancellations, or other service disruptions, leaving some unable to access transportation altogether.

These communication challenges were among the most frequently cited concerns. Feedback consistently emphasized the need for better coordination with local transit providers, more reliable scheduling, and improved real-time communication tools to ensure riders receive timely and accessible service updates.

Another widely cited concern involves weather-related challenges affecting the safety and mobility of riders. Many respondents described the difficulty of finding adequate shelter while waiting for transportation, noting that individuals are often exposed to harsh weather conditions such as snow, rain, and extreme heat. Snowy conditions were identified as a major barrier for riders with mobility limitations, making it difficult or unsafe to reach bus stops and boarding areas.

 Feedback strongly suggested the need for better support during severe weather events, including improved coordination with emergency management and human service agencies to provide access to warming and cooling shelters, emergency transportation options, and accessible routes during hazardous conditions.

Other topics mentioned were shortage of transit staff, expansion of fixed route transit as many don't have direct access to major bus networks, service-animal accommodations, lack of financial stability, as well as difficulty navigating technology.

4: Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis

When conducting this needs analysis, MARC staff considered the data collected from service providers and riders as well as anecdotal information provided from the in-person workshops. The sections that follow organize this data and feedback into geographic gaps, level of service gaps, capacity gaps, user satisfaction gaps, and information and accessibility gaps.

Geographic Gaps

Most of the region's transit service is concentrated in the urban cores of Kansas City, Missouri, Kansas City, Kansas, and western Jackson County. This makes sense from a productivity standpoint; fixed route transit works best in denser areas with walkable neighborhoods. However, this means the 3/4-mile complimentary paratransit buffer does not cover many of the elderly residents of our region outside of this area.

It is important to note that simply having geographic coverage does not mean that the services in that area have the capacity to fully meet demand.

Jackson County

In Jackson County, many of the outlying cities have ended their contracts with KCATA, leaving them without transit service and some cities without RideKC Freedom service. The cities of Grandview, Lee's Summit, Independence, Blue Springs, and parts of Raytown all have significant senior populations that are in this category.

The smaller more rural cities of Greenwood, Grain Valley, Oak Grove, and Buckner have concentrated senior populations without transit access as well. They are reliant on eitas and OATS for transportation services.

Johnson County

The population of Johnson County is primarily located inside the I-435 loop. While there is transit service in Johnson County and Rural areas, particularly in the south and west parts of Johnson County (De Soto, Spring Hill, Edgerton) have limited service options. However, all of Johnson County has RideKC Freedom service available to residents.

Wyandotte County

As mentioned, the majority of fixed-route transit service in Wyandotte County is concentrated in the east in the core of Kansas City, Kansas. The whole county is in the

RideKC Freedom service area. That said, residents south of I-70, particularly south of the Kansas River, have a significant unmet need.

Clay County

While Clay County has fixed route transit through KCATA, service is limited to the southern portion of the county, and what service does operate is infrequent. Northern Clay County is served by Clay County Senior Services, Excelsior Springs Omni Bus, and Liberty Access.

Ray County

Ray County is a very rural county and does not have any fixed route transit and is not in the RideKC Freedom service area. The only service provider in the county is Direct Transit, operated by the county government.

Leavenworth County

Leavenworth County has no fixed route services. Senior Express covers transportation service countywide.

Cass County

OATS is the only transportation service provider in Cass County, and covers the county generally, as well as the city of Pleasant Hill with a dedicated service. Other than that, Cass County has very few options for residents in need of transportation.

Miami County

Miami County has no fixed route transit service and very limited transportation options for residents. There are no dedicated service providers in the county. The Paola Senior Center provides some rides to residents with a volunteer driver pool, but they are at risk of ending their services in the summer of 2026 due to funding issues.

Level of Service Gaps

One of the main limitations of paratransit service and demand response type services is largely the need to book in advance, sometimes days in advance. While this may be suitable for medical needs or regular trips to work or school, it leaves riders without the ability to be spontaneous and flexible with their time.

Additionally, lack of service during evenings and weekends is a concern for many riders and reported gap by service providers. For many riders, this lack of service significantly curtails their recreational opportunities and ability to visit family and friends, impacting their quality of life and ability to live independently.

It was also stated by many that attended the public workshops that the variety of driver training levels and service types meant that people with mobility issues sometimes could

not be met at their door and helped into a vehicle. This is due to limitations in liability from service to service and driver to driver, as well as a lack of understanding on the side of the rider as to what type of service they are booking. A standardized driver pool and training levels could help with this, though a number of drivers are volunteers or unable to provide this level of service.

Gaps in Capacity

While there are many non-profits and transportation providers in addition to RideKC services, many report that they do not have sufficient staffing, vehicle availability, or trained drivers to fully meet the needs of their communities. This gap is expected to grow as the Kansas City region's population continues to age and expand further outward into the suburbs. A sprawling, aging population will be difficult to serve and exacerbate the existing gaps in capacity. Increased funding levels are a key component to addressing this gap.

User Satisfaction Gaps

Based on feedback from riders and staff at local non-profits both in person and reflected in the public survey, the largest gaps in satisfaction were in the ability to get where they need to go any time of day, any day of the week, and being able to get where they need to go no matter where it is. This indicates that geographic gaps are top of mind, as well as service reliability generally.

Gaps in Information and Accessibility

Generally, people cited issues with being able to access information about what transit and transportation services were available to them, with most respondents (58%) in the public survey saying they were not sure if they were eligible for ADA paratransit services. Even though this information may exist and be available for riders, there is a disconnect between the service providers and the riders themselves. It should be noted that many webpages where this information is stored are not kept up to date.

Additionally, transit services in the Kansas City region have been in considerable flux over the course of 2024 and 2025, and this uncertainty is expected to continue into the near future. This flux translates to a confused regional message and understanding of what services are available to regional residents.

Centralized information, enhanced regional coordination, and ensuring agency webpages are kept up to date will be key to overcoming this gap.

5: Plan Recommendations

Planning Context

While the Coordinated Plan focuses on transportation for older adults and people with disabilities, other major MARC plans include considerations for these populations as well. These plans include:

- Smart Moves Transit and Mobility Plan[5]
- Connected KC 2050[6]
- Natural Hazard Risk Assessment[7]
- Regional Pedestrian Policy Plan[8]

Each of these plans contain recommendations and strategies for improving transportation access for older adults and people with disabilities. These plans guide and shape the approach MARC and its planning partners and member entities take in addressing these concerns in our regional communities. For more information on each plan, visit www.marc.org. Each of these plans were considered when forming the goals and strategies in the Coordinated Plan. The top three most common strategies that can be found in these plans are listed below. It should be noted that these are not the only strategies present in the plans but are most relevant to the Coordinated Plan and the needs of its target populations.

- Improving information and messaging, as well as centralizing that information
- Coordination between agencies regionally
- Understand and develop financial strategies

Best Practices

Common Themes Across Plans in Peer Regions

While reviewing peer and aspirational transit agencies coordinated plans, several clear and recurring guidelines emerged. These plans consistently emphasize similar approaches to outreach and engagement, with only minor variations in execution.

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[5] Smart Moves 3.0 Transit and Mobility Plan, 2017
[6] MARC Connected KC 2050 Plan, 2025
[7] MARC Natural Hazard Transportation Risk Assessment, 2025
[8] MARC Regional Pedestrian Policy Plan, 2018

Multiple Engagement and Outreach Formats

All regions studied used a mix of engagement tools such as public meetings, stakeholder and public surveys, focus groups, and advisory committees. Agencies often partnered with trusted community-based organizations (e.g., senior centers, disability advocates, churches) to reach individuals who might not attend formal public meetings or workshops.

Survey Insights

Surveys were designed to be as accessible as possible, distributed through email blasts, social media posts, printed flyers with QR codes, newsletters, and existing provider communication channels. Several regions translated survey materials into other languages, such as Spanish, to improve reach.

Common survey topics included barriers to transportation, travel needs and destinations, service priorities and potential improvements, and awareness of existing options. Sample questions included:

- What are the biggest challenges you face in getting where you need to go?
- What types of trips are most difficult to make?
- Which improvements would make the biggest difference for you?
- Are you aware of the transportation services currently available in your area?

From reviewing other regions' Coordinated Plans, several practices stood out as particularly effective and could be adapted for our region.

Use of Interviews for Targeted Input

The Memphis MPO plan (*Coordinate Mid-South, 2025 update*) relied not only on surveys but also on structured interviews with key stakeholders and riders. This approach helped surface more nuanced feedback and gave MPOs a clearer understanding of specific challenges such as those faced by dialysis patients, caregivers, and service providers that would not typically be captured through standard surveys.

Youth Advisory Groups

In Denver's DRCOG *2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan – Coordinated Transit Plan*, a Youth Advisory Board was created to better understand the experiences of younger riders with disabilities or limited transportation options. This provided valuable insight into trip needs for school, jobs, and healthcare. These are areas that are often overlooked when outreach focuses primarily on older riders and human service providers.

Invest in Accessible and Inclusive Communication

Regions that made engagement materials easy to understand and available in multiple languages (especially Spanish) consistently reached broader audiences. Using multiple channels such as digital (email, social media), in-person (flyers, events), and community networks helped connect with hard-to-reach populations.

Goals and Strategies

The goals and strategies recommended by this plan take into consideration the information established in the previous sections and aim to provide a framework to guide projects and programs to address regional mobility needs, as well as shape the goals of related plans across the region.

Each of the six goals has a list of supporting strategies for implementation. The first four goals were also present in the previous iteration of the Coordinated Plan, with some modifications and revisions to their strategies. Goals five and six are new additions to the Coordinated Plan.

The development of these goals was undertaken by a small working group of MAC members. The existing goals and their supporting strategies were each examined by the group, and after discussion were either revised or kept as is. Feedback from the working group determined the two new goals on the list. The updated list was then brough to a special session of the MAC and reviewed with the wider committee. With no further input, the goals and strategies were adopted as shown below.

1) **Maintain existing service levels for mobility service users in the region**
    a. Ensure that existing service levels are maintained by replacing vehicles past their useful life.
    b. Ensure that existing service levels are maintained by sustaining funding levels for subsidized fare programs.
    c. Secure sustainable funding partnerships. Eligible Project Examples: Vehicle Replacement, subsidized program continuation.

2) **Expand service levels for mobility service users in the region**
    a. Expand service hours into nights, early mornings, or increase service frequency and/or responsiveness, including weekends.
    b. Expand level of service from curb-to-curb to door-to-door, door-through-door, or beyond.

c. Expand the types of trips that are eligible for service populations e.g. work-based trips, recreational trips, utilitarian trips such as grocery stores and pharmacies, etc.).

d. Leverage partnerships to reduce duplication.

e. Expand days of service, including weekends.

f. Improve administrative efficiency through mobility management and coordination to improve cross-jurisdictional transportation. Eligible Project Examples: Expanding hours, days, or geographic coverage; improving inter-regional travel; enhancing levels of service.

3) **Improve the quality and accessibility of information to the public**

a. Continue to improve the region's One-Call/One-Click capabilities.

b. Ensure and regularly test ADA accessibility and intuitiveness of mobile apps and web information.

c. Improve administrative efficiency through mobility management to reduce the complexity of information being conveyed to the public.

d. Publicize and market changes to existing services, service expansions, and/or the introduction of new services.

e. Engage transportation-disadvantaged populations directly to improve our knowledge of what they need.

f. Utilize data to make informed decisions about enhanced mobility services.

g. Establish regional service standards.

h. Ensure that all service providers are equipped with data tracking capabilities.

i. Ensure that service providers are coordinating with MARC staff to map, analyze, and publicize service areas, trends, and network gaps. Eligible Project Examples: Marketing materials, mobility management, one-call/one-click functionality, data resources.

4) **Bridge gaps in the built environment to improve network accessibility**

a. Construct ADA-accessible infrastructure to improve safety and accessibility of transit facilities.

b. As on-demand services propagate, it will be important to consider how destinations beyond transit facilities are made accessible, including integrating universal design principles into local development policies across the region.

c. Support the implementation of Smart Moves 3.0 recommendations, including mobility hubs and active transportation infrastructure Eligible project examples: ADA sidewalks, curb cuts, crosswalk signals, other built environment improvements.

5) **Integrate and coordinate related planning efforts, communications, initiatives and programs**
    a. Ensure accessibility needs of older adults and people with disabilities are considered through other transportation planning efforts and initiatives, such as the Smart Moves regional transit plan, local land use development regulations, ADA implementation programs, universal design principles in the development of application-based solutions, etc.
    b. Support efforts to secure new sources of funding to support investment in capital and operating costs of the transportation system, including fixed route services, ADA paratransit and non-ADA special transportation services.
    c. Leverage and strengthen partnerships to improve cross-jurisdictional cross-sector collaboration and coordination amongst public, private and non-profit sectors.

6) **Support regional transportation goals**
    a. Support programs which allow for purchase of low and no-emission vehicles for public and private fleets.
    b. Encourage transportation providers to offer charging facilities for low and no-emissions vehicles.
    c. Provide educational programs on the benefits and convenience of fleet electrification.
    d. Support new and innovative transportation services, facilities and technologies to ensure safe and efficient travel for people and goods.
    e. Collaborate with local governments to create mobility hubs in key areas where transportation options come together. Make it easy to access and switch between bikes, buses, micro transit, rental cars, ride-hailing services and other modes and services.
    f. Support digital applications to enhance safety, accessibility and real-time information about the regional transportation system.

Definitions

For the purposes of this plan, the following terms are defined:

Older adults: Individuals over the age of 65; in some areas of the region, enhanced mobility service eligibility is extended to those aged 60 to 65 as well.

Individuals with disabilities: Individuals who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. This includes individuals who do not have a disability but are regarded as having a disability.

Low-income populations: Individuals with annual household incomes less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Level, which was $22,590 per year for a one-person household as of 2014.

Transportation-disadvantaged populations: Older adults, individuals with disabilities and low-income populations.

Public transportation agencies: Organizations operating scheduled fixed-route transit and paratransit services for the use of the general public.

Nonprofit providers: Organizations providing smaller-scale, typically on-demand transportation services to a specific clientele and for specific purposes.

Private sector providers: Organizations providing transportation services for any purpose, on a for-profit basis.

Enhanced mobility services: Transportation services provided by public transportation agencies, nonprofit providers, or private-sector providers specifically – although not necessarily exclusively – for transportation-disadvantaged populations.

Mobility management: A strategic approach to coordinating services between providers to expand information resources and "right-sized" access to users.

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AAA	Area Agencies on Aging
ASL	American Sign Language
CFN	Center for Neighborhoods
CKC 2050	Connected Kansas City 2050
CPT-HSTP	Coordinated Public Transit & Human Services Transportation Plan
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
HCBS	Home and Community Based Services
JCCC	Johnson County Community College
JCT	Johnson County Transit
KCATA	Kansas City Area Transportation Authority
KCI	Kansas City International Airport
KCSA	Kansas City Streetcar Authority
KDOT	Kansas Department of Transportation
KS	Kansas
KU	University of Kansas
MAC	Mobility Advisory Committee
MARC	Mid-America Regional Council
MCC	Metropolitan Community College
MEHTAP	Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program
MO	Missouri
MoDOT	Missouri Department of Transportation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
NEMT	Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
OAA	Older Americans Act
OATS	Operating Above the Standard
OD	Origin Destination
PMP	Project Management Plan
PPP	Public Participation Plan
SSA	Social Security Administration
TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee
TTPC	Total Transportation Policy Committee
UGT	Unified Government Transportation
UMKC	University of Missouri Kansas City
UZA	Urbanized Area
VA	Veterans Affairs

Appendix A – List of Transit Routes in the Kansas City Region

Route Name	Mode	Route Type	Route Operator
KC Streetcar	Streetcar	Fast & Frequent	KCSA
Troost Max	Fixed Route Bus	Fast & Frequent	KCATA
Prospect Max	Fixed Route Bus	Fast & Frequent	KCATA
9-9th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
11- Northeast-Westside	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
12-12th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
18-Indiana	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
19-East-West Connector	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
21-Cleveland-Antioch	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
23-23rd Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
24-Independence short	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
25-Troost	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
27-27th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
28-Blue Ridge	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
29-Blue Ridge Limited	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
31-31st Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
35-35th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
39-39th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
47-Broadway	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
50-Wornall-Brookside	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
57-Wornall	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
63-63rd Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
71-Prospect	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
75-75th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
85-Paseo	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
101-State Ave full	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
102 Central	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	UGT
103 3rd Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	UGT
104-Argentine	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	UGT
106-Quindaro-Amazon	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	UGT
107-7th Street-KU Med	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
116 West Parallel	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	UGT
201-North Oak	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA

Route Name	Mode	Route Type	Route Operator
210-Front Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
229-Boardwalk-KCI	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
238-Meadowbrook	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	KCATA
401 Metcalf-Plaza	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
402 Johnson-Quivira	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
403 Antioch-KU Med	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
404 Metcalf-Downtown	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
475 Quivira-75th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
487 87th Street-MTC	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
495 95th Street	Fixed Route Bus	Local Bus	JCT
510 K-10 Connector	Fixed Route Bus	Express	JCT
520 Strang Line Exp.	Fixed Route Bus	Express	JCT
550-Lee's Summit Exp.	Fixed Route Bus	Express	KCATA
563 Shawnee Exp.	Fixed Route Bus	Express	JCT
569 South OP Exp.	Fixed Route Bus	Express	JCT
298-NKC Flex	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
199 Wyandotte Co. Micro.	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
499 Johnson Co. Micro.	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
Lee's Summit Service	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	City of Lee's Summit
RideLV Leavenworth	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	City of Leavenworth
Bonner Springs/Tiblow	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	City of Bonner Springs
IRIS - KCMO	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
IRIS - Independence	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
IRIS - Liberty	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
IRIS - Raytown	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
IRIS - Riverside	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA
IRIS - Gladstone	On-Demand/Flex	Flex	KCATA

Source: RideKC