

PROSPECTUS

INTRODUCTION

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kansas City region, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is responsible under Section 134 of Title 23, United States Code, for carrying out a continuing and comprehensive transportation planning process in cooperation with the States of Kansas and Missouri and the region's public transportation operators. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) is the most recent law establishing federal transportation policy and funding authorizations. Federal regulations implementing transportation policy (23 CFR §450.308) require that:

- "(b) Metropolitan transportation planning activities performed with funds provided under title 23 U.S.C. and title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 shall be documented in a unified planning work program (UPWP)...
- (c) ...each MPO, in cooperation with the State(s) and public transportation operator(s) shall develop a UPWP that includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the MPA [metropolitan planning area]. The UPWP shall identify work proposed for the next one- or two-year period by major activity and task (including activities that address the planning factors in §450.306(a)), in sufficient detail to indicate who (e.g., MPO, State, public transportation operator, local government, or consultant) will perform the work, the schedule for completing the work, the resulting products, the proposed funding by activity/task, and a summary of the total amounts and sources of Federal and matching funds."

As its name suggests, the UPWP promotes a unified regional approach to transportation planning in order to achieve regional goals and objectives. The UPWP performs three distinct functions: (1) it describes the transportation planning activities MARC and other agencies propose to undertake during 2025 to address regional issues and priorities; (2) it serves to document the proposed expenditures of federal, state and local funds in support of applications for various planning grants; and (3) it provides a management tool for MARC and the funding agencies in scheduling major transportation planning activities, milestones and products. As an example, under the Kansas City region's current air quality status, MARC updates the Metropolitan Transportation Plan on a five-year cycle. The first two years of the cycle focus on follow-up activities identified in the previous plan, updating databases on travel behavior and enhancing technical tools to set the stage for the next update. The third year of the cycle focuses on the development of a policy framework and policy direction for the plan and preparation of demographic and revenue forecasts for the plan period. The fourth and fifth years focus on development of the plan components, including modal elements, project listings, financial capacity analyses. This concludes with final public review and agency adoption of the updated plan. Some elements of public outreach and engagement and performance monitoring will be part of each year's activities.

The FY 2026 UPWP has been developed by MARC, with input from local governments, area transit agencies, the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The document is organized into specific work elements, for which objectives, work activities, products, completion dates, and funding sources are identified as appropriate. The 2026 UPWP has been developed in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding adopted in 2013 and updated in 2018 that identifies the roles and responsibilities of MARC as the MPO, the Kansas and

Missouri Departments of Transportation, the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, the City of Independence, Johnson County Transit, Unified Government Transit and the Kansas City Streetcar Authority in the metropolitan planning process for the Kansas City region.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) began operations as a metropolitan council of governments on January 1, 1972, as a result of a merger between the Mid-America Council of Governments and the Metropolitan Planning Commission. In 1974, the governors of Kansas and Missouri officially designated MARC as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Kansas City metropolitan area. MARC is also designated as the regional agency responsible for air quality planning under Section 174 of the Federal Clean Air Act.

The function of MARC is to provide a forum for the presentation and resolution of metropolitan problems and issues by the duly elected officials of general-purpose local governments. The types of problems and issues that are addressed by MARC typically are those that transcend established local government boundaries. Transportation systems, air quality, water and sewer systems, work force, cultural, public safety, homeland security, human service, health care, and housing needs are illustrative examples of regional questions and issues with which MARC is involved.

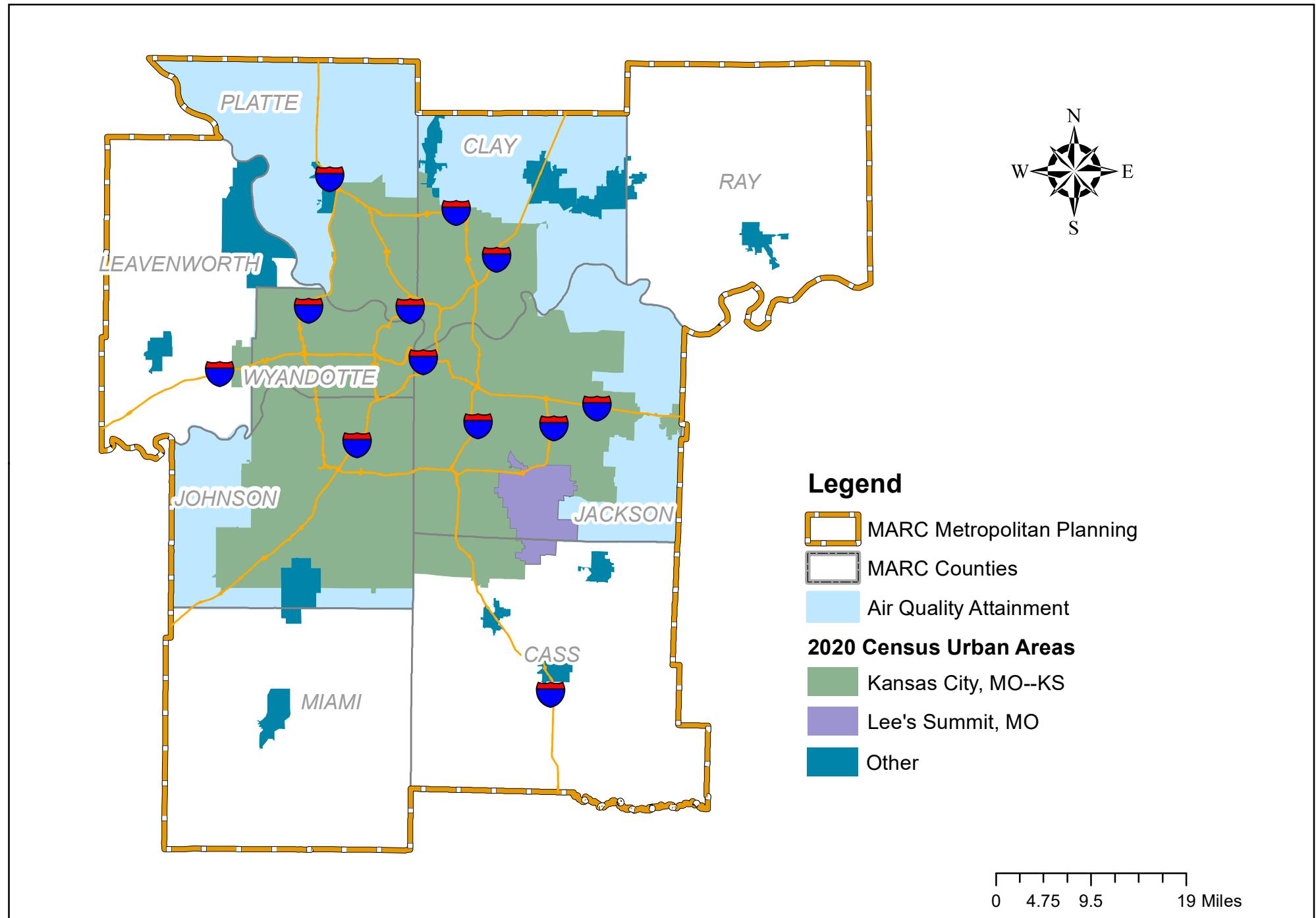
The MARC metropolitan planning organization (MPO) encompasses a population of over 2.0 million people and consists of the entirety of nine counties: Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte Counties in Kansas, and Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray Counties in Missouri and a small portion of Lafayette County in Missouri. The area covered by the MPO is shown in figure 1.

The MARC Board of Directors consists of thirty-three elected officials. The nine counties and the six largest cities within the region (Kansas City, Independence and Lee's Summit, Missouri and Kansas City, Overland Park, and Olathe, Kansas) have direct board representation. The smaller cities are represented on the Board by their counties or by local elected officials selected at the county level.

The Kansas City region's transportation planning process is shown conceptually in Figure 2. The process is an ongoing, evolving process involving many iterations and refinements over time. The first major step in the process is the development and adoption of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). Contributing to the MTP are the outputs of the congestion management process, as well as other management systems and performance monitoring activities. Projections of regional land use, population and employment provide another key input to the MTP, since they determine to a considerable extent the future transportation needs of the region. The process also involves an extensive public engagement effort to identify community issues, concerns, and priorities. MARC's MTP is project specific (for regionally significant projects) and financially constrained.

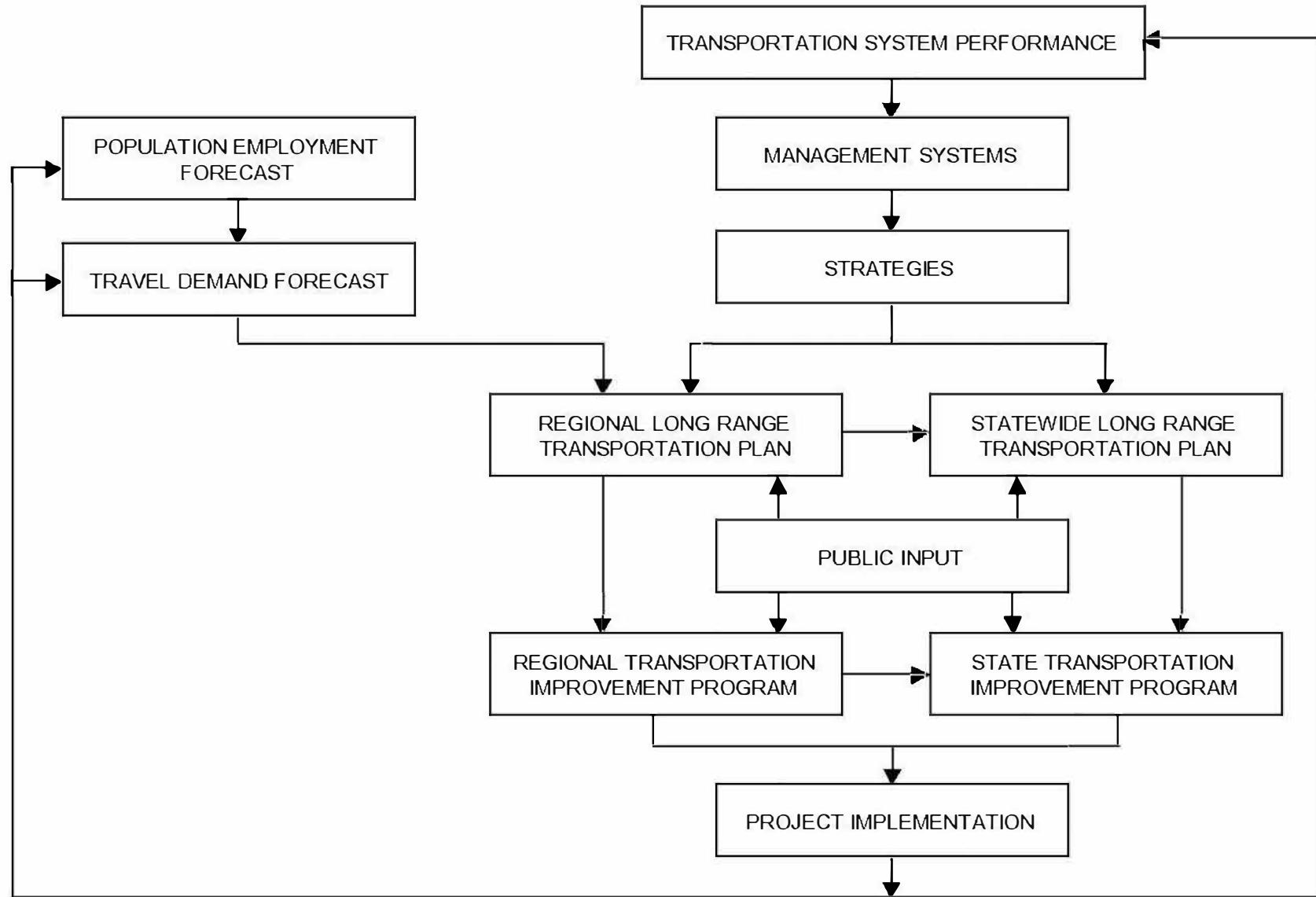
The MTP provides the basis for development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which is a financially constrained list of projects to be funded and implemented over the next five years. The TIP must be consistent with the MTP. After approval by MARC, the TIP is approved by the Governors, or their designees, of both Kansas and Missouri and incorporated into the statewide transportation improvement program (STIP) for each state.

MARC Regional Boundaries



The most recent update to the Metropolitan Planning Boundary was approved by the Governor of Missouri on October 17, 2023.

Figure 2 – Transportation Planning Process



The region's current air quality status does not require the MTP and TIP to conform to a state implementation plan (SIP) for air quality. However, as standards become more stringent, the potential exists for Kansas City to be designated as nonattainment and significant work is required to be prepared for such a designation. In order to perform required conformity analysis on the MTP and TIP, the newest emissions model (currently MOVES2015) requires ongoing maintenance and data collection to keep all inputs current and relevant. All criteria pollutant ambient air quality standards are required to be reviewed every five years, and although a revised ozone standard was issued in 2015, no determination on MARC's air quality status has been made.

Once projects are included in the current year of the TIP, they may proceed to implementation, which in turn results in changes in system condition, and performance that may be reflected in the management systems and performance monitoring activities. These changes, as well as new land use, population and employment forecasts, require periodic updates to the MTP. Because of the region's current status as an air quality attainment area, MARC updates the MTP on a 5-year cycle. If the region is redesignated to non-attainment for ozone, the MTP will be updated every four years.

The transportation planning process must consider projects and strategies that address the following factors identified in the IIJA:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism

Products

The major products of the transportation planning process, in addition to the UPWP, are the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Numerous special reports, corridor/subarea studies, and analyses on a wide variety of transportation issues are also produced on a regular basis.

Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The MTP is the centerpiece of the metropolitan transportation planning process, and MARC has developed a number of Metropolitan Transportation Plans since its inception. In June of 2025, MARC approved a major update to *ConnectedKC 2050*, the region's current MTP. *ConnectedKC 2050* is built around the vision of a sustainable metropolitan area and promotes the identification of and investment in nodes and corridors of activity. *ConnectedKC 2050* articulates a broad

set of region-wide transportation goals, policies and strategies that address transportation's role in areas such as place-making, public health, and energy use. The plan is financially constrained, reflecting only funding that is currently available or can reasonably be expected to be available during the plan's time frame, and it identifies major transportation investments through the year 2050. In addition, MARC advanced strategies reflected in the Clean Air Action Plan and incorporated these into MTP policies, goals, and strategies. The MTP must be completely updated at least every five years but may be revised more frequently if necessary. The next major update of the MTP will be completed in 2030.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP is a prioritized list of transportation projects proposed for implementation during the next five years. Projects included in the TIP must be consistent with the MTP, and are submitted for consideration by local government agencies, state transportation agencies, local transit operators or by MARC. The TIP must cover at least four years, although MARC produces a five-year TIP and processes amendments on a quarterly cycle. The TIP is financially constrained in each year of the program, meaning that the funding identified for transportation projects in a given year cannot exceed the amount reasonably expected to be available to the region under existing federal, state, and local programs. Prior to adoption of the TIP, MARC provides an opportunity for public review and comment. No regionally significant project, regardless of funding source, or any project utilizing federal transportation funds may proceed to implementation unless it is included in the TIP. The TIP must be completely updated every four years, based on the last date of approval by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. MARC currently updates the TIP under a two-year cycle, and the 2026-2030 TIP was completed in 2025.

Advisory Committees

MARC's transportation work is in large part accomplished through the engagement with several policy, planning and programming committees composed of a variety of regional stakeholders. The MARC committee structure was modified in 2025 to address concerns related to efficiency and complexity. These modifications resulted in the consolidation of several committees and the creation of topical roundtables. The major committees involved in the transportation planning process are described below (see Figure 3):

Total Transportation Policy Committee (TTPC). TTPC provides policy-level input to the Board of Directors on significant transportation issues, programs, and projects, and serves as the primary focal point for MARC's overall transportation planning program. Membership on the TTPC includes elected officials and staff representatives from local counties and municipalities, as well as representatives from the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT), the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT), and non-voting representatives from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Air Quality Forum (AQF). AQF provides policy input on MARC's air quality programs, including transportation-related issues such as conformity procedures, mobile source inventories, and transportation control measures. The AQF plays a lead role in the development of the region's air quality strategy, including the Kansas City portion of the state implementation plan (SIP) for air quality. Membership includes representatives from local governments, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the Missouri Department of Transportation, the Kansas Department of Transportation, and other related stakeholders.

Timeline for updating required MPO plans and documents

	2026				2027				2028				2029				2030				2031				
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																					
Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update required June 2030																									
Transportation Improvement Program Approved biannually in October																									
Unified Planning Work Program Approved annually in November																									
Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan Update required December 2030																									
Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Manual Update required December 2028																									
Limited English Proficiency Plan Update required December 2028																									
Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Update required September 2027																									
Public Participation Plan Update required December 2026																									

Climate and Environment Council (CEC). The CEC is a collaborative, action-oriented committee that will guide the implementation of the Kansas City Regional Climate Action Plan. This committee is jointly supported by MARC and Climate Action KC.

Sustainable Places Policy Committee (SPPC). The SPPC provides leadership and policy advice to the MARC Board of Directors in regional sustainable development. Under the guidance of the SPPC, MARC collaborates with local communities to update and implement land-use strategies that support transportation, equity, environment, and conservation principles.

Planning Committees. The planning committees report to the TTPC and focus on carrying out the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-based multimodal transportation planning process required under federal regulation. The planning committees include the Technical Advisory Committee, Destination: Safe Coalition, and the Mobility Advisory Committee. Membership on these committees is a mixture of elected officials, local government and transit agency staff members, state and federal officials, and representatives from various community groups.

Programming Committees. Three committees provide guidance in the programming of federal transportation funds.

- Two Programming Committees, one each for Kansas and Missouri, are composed of local government and transit agency staff members, federal and state DOT staff, and representatives

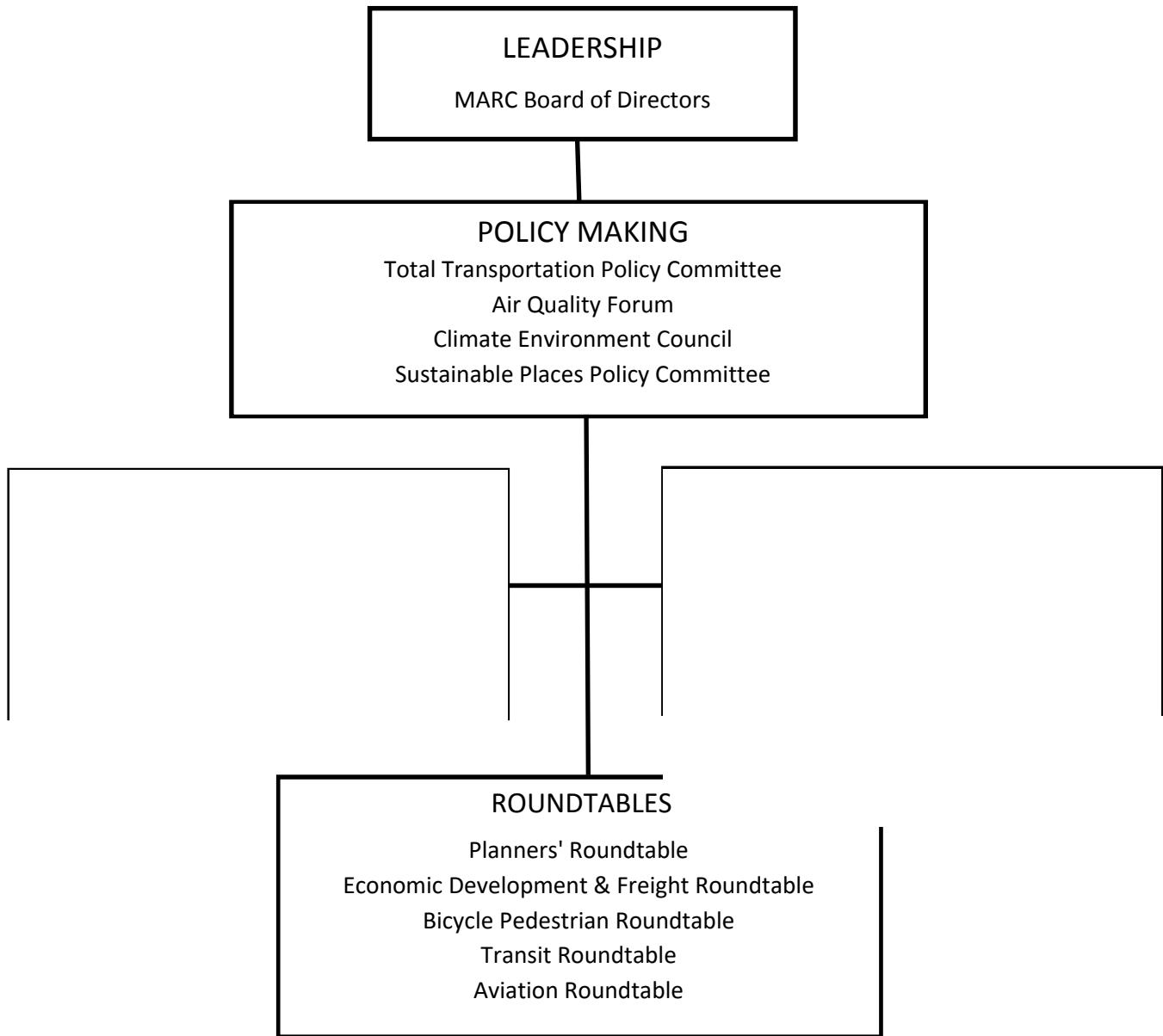
from various community groups. The committees prioritize Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funds suballocated to the Kansas City region for inclusion in the MTP and TIP. These funds include the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality Program (CMAQ), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TA). Separate committees are maintained for each state since the federal funds are apportioned at the state level and must be spent within that state.

- The Mobility Advisory Committee is co-administered by MARC and the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority. The committee addresses issues regarding enhanced mobility in the Kansas City region and evaluates and prioritizes FTA Section 5310 program projects.

Roundtables. A series of topical roundtables provides opportunities for networking and coordination, identification of emerging issues, and may serve as the basis for the creation of ad hoc working groups to provide support for activities related to the metropolitan planning process. These roundtables will initially include the Planners' Roundtable, Economic Development and Freight Roundtable, Bicycle Pedestrian Roundtable, Transit Roundtable, and Aviation Roundtable.

Technical Forecast Committee. The Technical Forecast Committee is a standing committee composed of local government representatives in the fields of planning, public works, and community development, as well as community/private sector representatives. The committee provides technical support in developing regional demographic forecasts, strategies, and policy evaluation.

MARC Transportation/Air Quality Committee Structure



Public Involvement

MARC's Public Participation Plan was approved in 2023 and is scheduled to be updated in 2026. The Public Participation Plan describes MARC's objectives in conducting public engagement activities, explains how public participation processes will be conducted in conjunction with major products, and identifies a set of techniques and strategies that MARC will draw from in developing specific public engagement activities/processes, including visualization techniques.

Agency Roles and Responsibilities

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the designated air quality planning agency for the region, MARC has the lead responsibility to ensure that the transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with federal and state regulations. Several other partner agencies play key roles in the transportation planning process, as discussed below.

State DOTs. MARC works cooperatively with the Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) and the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) in carrying out all of its transportation planning activities. State representatives serve on the Total Transportation Policy Committee, as well as the various modal and programming committees. Both state DOTs have planning offices with personnel designated as liaisons for metropolitan planning and programming.

State DOTs are responsible for a number of activities that affect the metropolitan planning process. They are charged with the development of Statewide Long-Range Transportation Plans, which are to reflect the Metropolitan Transportation Plan developed by MARC. Each state DOT also develops a statewide transportation improvement program (STIP), which must embody the TIP developed by MARC for the Kansas City metropolitan area. Accordingly, both state DOTs participate actively in the process by which projects are prioritized and included in the region's TIP.

The state DOTs also serve as additional linkages between MARC and federal transportation agencies (i.e., the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). While MARC has direct contact with these agencies, some communications with federal agencies, particularly those involving formal federal actions, are channeled through the state DOTs. The state DOTs also provide grant oversight of MARC's federal planning funds.

State Air Quality Agencies. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) have overall responsibility for compliance with the Clean Air Act, including development and adoption of state implementation plans (SIPs). Both agencies have formally designated MARC as the lead planning agency for air quality in the Kansas City metropolitan area. As a result, MARC plays a lead role in developing mobile and stationary source emissions inventories, identifying, and analyzing potential air quality strategies, and drafting SIP revisions for the region. These products are then submitted to MDNR and KDHE for review and approval. Both state air quality agencies serve on MARC's Air Quality Forum.

Public Transit Agencies. The bistate Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) is the largest provider of public transportation in the Kansas City metropolitan area. In addition, three local governments provide substantial public transportation services: Johnson County, Kan., operates Johnson

County Transit; the city of Independence, Mo., operates IndeBus; and the Unified Government of Kansas City, Kan., and Wyandotte County operates Unified Government Transit/UGT.

The KCATA operates several of the Unified Government Transit routes directly. Further, KCATA provides contract management and planning services for both the Unified Government and the City of Independence transit.

A fifth transit operator, the Kansas City Streetcar Authority, began streetcar service in downtown Kansas City, Mo. in 2016. These five transit agencies submit projects to MARC for inclusion in the TIP and carry out many of the transit-related planning activities contained in the Unified Planning Work Program.

MAJOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING INITIATIVES

The work elements identified in the UPWP are intended to assist the region in informing, refining, enhancing, or implementing elements of the MTP. Appendix A reflects how work elements relate to the MTP's goals and objectives. The following is a brief discussion of the major transportation planning initiatives that are reflected in the 2026 UPWP.

- Respond to planning provisions in the IIJA – Tasks 1.1, 2.2, 3.5, 3.9, 4.1, and 5.10
- Suballocated federal funds programming – Task 4.1
- Economic, Demographic and Travel Demand Forecasting – Tasks 2.1 and 3.1
- Performance Measures and Targets – Tasks 2.2, 3.6, and 4.1
- Regional Active Transportation Planning – Task 3.4 and 3.5
- Housing and Transportation Coordination Study – Task 5.10
- Completion of the regional activity-based travel demand model – Task 3.1
- Completion of the Regional Bikeway Plan Update – Task 3.5
- Completion of the Smart Moves Transit Plan update – Task 3.5
- 2026 Travel Patterns After Action Assessment – Task 5.11
- Natural Hazard Transportation Risk Assessment Phase 2 – Task 5-12
- Metrogreen Network Assessment – Task 5.13