

RideKC smartmoves 3.0

TRANSIT AND MOBILITY PLAN
FOR THE KANSAS CITY REGION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A PROJECT OF THE MID-AMERICA REGIONAL COUNCIL AND ITS PARTNERS



I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Smart Moves 3.0 is the Kansas City region's 20-year plan for transit and mobility. It builds on a solid foundation of prior planning, and prepares the region for greater choices in the transportation environment we currently live in — one that is rapidly evolving.

The mobility landscape envisioned by Smart Moves 3.0 includes efficient, high-ridership transit service linked by well-located mobility hubs where riders can transfer from one fixed route to another or connect with mobility services to get where they need to go. This plan also recognizes that efficient transit thrives on density.

Plan Vision: Smart Moves imagines a Kansas City region with viable mobility solutions for empowered residents, successful businesses and vibrant communities.

WHY SMART MOVES 3.0?

Smart Moves 3.0 — the third version of the Smart Moves long-range transit plan — serves as the regional blueprint for implementation of a new and improved transit and mobility system. Transit agencies, local governments and the Mid-America Regional Council will use this plan to guide the development of new projects and initiatives that seek to:

- + Increase the number of jobs accessible by transit and mobility services.
- + Increase ridership of transit and use of other mobility options.
- + Increase development/redevelopment along high-capacity corridors and near mobility hubs.
- + Increase availability of customer information and resources through technology.
- + Increase funding for transit and mobility services.
- + Decrease greenhouse gas emissions and other transportation-related pollutants.

The Smart Moves plan was first adopted in 2005 and updated in 2008. Since initial adoption, regional transit planning work has contributed to a number of changes and accomplishments:

- + MAX bus rapid transit service on Main and Troost.
- + New transit centers in Kansas in Mission, at 47th and State Avenue and at 7th and Minnesota.
- + Launch of the RideKC Streetcar.
- + Creation of RideKC, a single brand for the four transit agencies, which includes a shared website and call center.
- + Introduction of a regional transit pass.
- + Establishment of one eligibility process for ADA paratransit riders.
- + Planning for Prospect MAX bus rapid transit service, anticipated to begin in 2018.

Plan Development: The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) and its partners—the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA), Unified Government Transit (UGT), Johnson County, and IndeBus—began work on Smart Moves 3.0 in June 2016 and the plan was adopted by the MARC and KCATA boards in 2017.

The plan was developed with extensive stakeholder engagement including outreach to businesses, community organizations and local governments. Opportunities for the public to weigh in and hear about plan development included 14 public meetings and multiple “pop-up” events as well as online surveys.

1 PLAN GOALS

Transit and mobility services are more than a means of transporting people from one place to another. Transit and mobility options mean getting employees to work, bringing students to school, transporting older adults to medical appointments and allowing friends and neighbors with disabilities to live independent lives. A strong transit system also shapes the fabric of a community by attracting economic development, creating walkable, vibrant public places, and contributing to a cleaner environment. While the region's residents have historically relied on cars as their primary mode of transportation — and many will continue to do so — residents, business owners and visitors have indicated a strong desire for more public transportation options. Planning for and investing in transit and mobility solutions is important for the economic and environmental health of the region and individual and collective quality of life.

This plan's goals outline the benefits that transit and mobility options can provide to communities and help tell the story of why the Kansas City region seeks system improvements.

Goal #1: Economic Vitality: Build and sustain a thriving, innovative and competitive economy

Transit powers business. Well-planned transit service increases employers' access to labor, enabling companies to attract and retain workers. The Smart Moves planning team has heard from

employers who struggle to hire and keep workers because of a lack of transportation options and from workers whose job opportunities are limited because they cannot afford a car.

For every **\$1** spent on transit,
\$4 in economic activity is created.¹



For most individuals and families, economic vitality starts with access to jobs and education. For many, transit and mobility services are essential to connecting to jobs and opportunities they may not have had otherwise.

Transit and mobility services generate economic development and regional competitiveness. A system of mobility hubs linking transit with services such as bike-share stations and vanpools can leverage economic benefits by expanding transit-supportive and transit-oriented development.

Goal #2: Placemaking: Coordinate investment in transit, mobility services and land use along transit corridors and at mobility hubs

Transit builds great places. By coordinating and focusing investments in transit, mobility services and land use along transit corridors and at mobility hubs, the Kansas City region can build vibrant, people-centric places. While vibrant places in urban and suburban settings will differ in look and feel, both share certain commonalities. Vibrant places offer transportation options — allowing residents and workers to choose whether to drive, walk, bike or ride the bus. Vibrant places also support a range of housing types, catering to families, seniors, persons with disabilities, single people and those who cannot afford to pay market rate.

Goal #3: Equity: Ensure all people have the opportunity to thrive by providing equal access to jobs, goods and services

Transit helps level the playing field. Transit provides options for those who cannot drive or cannot afford a car, including lower-income residents, older adults and persons with disabilities. Providing

Nearly **60%**
of transit trips are
taken to places of
EMPLOYMENT²

access to opportunities — such as employment, education and health care, as well as amenities including grocery stores, cultural institutions and shopping centers — is essential to creating equity within the transportation system and improving quality of life. Another component of providing equal access is making

available a range of housing options — including affordable and accessible units — in and around transit corridors and mobility hubs.



Goal #4: Transportation Choices: Expand mobility options to better connect residents and visitors to jobs and services

Transit provides options. While many residents cannot drive a car because of economic circumstances or physical and other limitations, a growing number of people would just rather not drive. Transit and mobility services offer travelers a chance to relax, get work done, or get exercise.

Transportation choices also include mobility innovations. On-demand services like RideKC Freedom, ride-hailing services and microtransit are increasingly important, and technological innovations make them easier to use. This plan recommends providing kiosks at mobility hubs to allow those who do not have access to smart phone apps to take advantage of these services.

In addition to technology, transportation management associations (TMAs) — member-driven nonprofit organizations that serve particular employment centers — have the potential to deliver transportation efficiencies of service. For example, TMAs often provide shuttles to pick

The American Public Transit Association (APTA) awarded KCATA the

GOLD AWARD FOR SECURITY EXCELLENCE

and the

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT FOR SAFETY IN 2017.³

up workers at one or more nearby mobility hubs and bring them to work, commonly known as “last mile” service. Where emerging employment centers are not in walking distance from a transit route, this innovation could help connect people to jobs.

Goal #5: Safety and Security: Ensure safe, comfortable and convenient access to services

Transit riders need to feel safe. In order for a transit system to be successful, people need to feel safe waiting for a ride and riding to their destination. A bus can run efficiently and be on time,

but if the community is reluctant to use the service because of security concerns, its benefits are greatly reduced. Investments in transit and infrastructure improvements such as bus shelters, lighting and sidewalks can bring an added sense of security by increasing the number of “eyes on the street.”

Additionally, with adequate planning, transit can provide critical transportation in the case of a natural or man-made disaster, especially for vulnerable populations who cannot drive. Planning for such emergencies can be very helpful in keeping buses moving and in reducing transportation costs and other negative impacts in a disaster.

Goal #6: System Condition: Ensure transit and mobility systems are maintained in good condition

Transit should be well maintained. In order to keep existing riders and attract new users, transit vehicles and amenities, and mobility services must be attractive and in good condition. Expanded and improved transit and mobility services are important, but this growth should not

come at the expense of maintenance of our current system. This plan calls for innovative solutions to transportation challenges, with lower-cost mobility options such as employer shuttles, bike and car sharing. By decreasing pressure on transit agencies to run fixed-route service where it may not be cost effective, these services allow agencies to direct resources into maintaining transit in a state of good repair.

Goal #7: System Performance: Manage the existing systems to achieve reliable and efficient performance and maximize the value of existing investments

Transit should provide efficiency and reliability. As a region, our transit investments are fine-tuned to maximize value, efficiency and reliability. These factors are important in making transit and mobility services a viable alternative to driving and providing quality service to riders. However, transit agencies must balance efficiency and reliability with other goals, such as covering an extensive area and serving those who are most dependent on transit. While funding can be redirected from one service to another to eliminate a redundancy or reallocate resources, new funding will be needed to add new transit routes or upgrade service frequency.

Goal #8: Public Health: Facilitate healthy, active living

Transit facilitates active living. Overall, public transit users walk more than those who do not ride transit. Using transit also pairs well with riding a bike — especially when a rider’s end destination is some

Individuals who use public transit get more than

THREE TIMES the amount of **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

per day than those who do not ride by walking to transit stops and ultimate destinations.⁴



distance from the nearest transit stop. Mobility services such as car-share, bike-share, and microtransit also help users integrate physical activity into their daily routine.

Goal #9: Environment: Improve air quality and conserve natural resources

Transit access reduces vehicle miles traveled, which reduces emissions and leads to more sustainable land use. Dense areas with mixed uses, such as retail, office and housing, reduce the distance and travel time

required to reach destinations, relieving congestion and conserving natural resources. Improving air quality through reduced emissions leads to better public health outcomes, particularly in areas with heavy vehicle traffic. More efficient use of existing roadways through transit and mobility services can also alleviate the need for additional roadway capacity. Integrating green infrastructure can reduce and filter stormwater runoff from the transportation system and help mitigate the urban heat island effect.

Goal #10: Climate Change and Energy Use: Decrease fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency, alternative and renewable fuels, and VMT reduction

Transit is good for our climate and energy independence. Transportation-related emissions account for nearly one-third of regional greenhouse gas emissions. Kansas City's dispersed employment centers lead to longer commutes and increased energy consumption. Improved transit and mobility services help reduce fossil fuel use by attracting new transit riders which may reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road, resulting in lower emissions and fewer vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Additionally, tailpipe emissions from the entire public transit fleet can be further reduced through conversion of fleets to compressed natural gas, propane, electric vehicles and other alternative fuels.

Since starting to replace its diesel fleet in 2014, KCATA has acquired

53 COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS BUSES

removing the equivalent pollution of

395 PASSENGER VEHICLES ANNUALLY.

2 WHAT'S NEW IN SMART MOVES 3.0?

Smart Moves 3.0 encourages development of a network of mobility hubs connected by efficient and effective fixed-route transit, with a special focus on jobs access and the integration of transit-oriented development concepts throughout the plan.

Develop a Network of Mobility Hubs

Smart Moves 3.0 identifies a network of more than 60 mobility hubs — places where mobility services and traditional fixed-route transit (e.g., bus, streetcar, bike sharing and ride sharing) come together. Mobility hubs are tailored to their location and offer a range of sizes and services. For example, a mobility hub in an urban area such as the River Market neighborhood might center around an information kiosk that provides real time transit information as well as connections to bike-share and car-share services, and pedestrian and bicycle routing information. A mobility hub in a suburban setting such as Gardner might include signage, parking and a shelter to wait for a vanpool.

Strengthen and Expand Fixed Route Transit

This plan envisions a series of 15-minute (fast and frequent), 30-minute (supporting), local and express bus and rail services. The fast and frequent routes function as the spine of the system — a dependable transit network that connects key corridors and activity centers and is complemented by newer on-demand, flexible services.

Improve Jobs Access

This plan includes a special focus on access to employment via transit and mobility services. Smart Moves 3.0 has fixed-route, mobility services and local development recommendations that seek to double the number of jobs accessible by transit in the next 10 years.

Bolster Transit-Oriented Development

Smart Moves 3.0 recognizes the intertwined nature of transportation and land use, and the benefits derived from orienting transit (and mobility services) toward a dense mix of uses. The plan's recommendations provide specific details on how to take advantage of this synergy.

JOBS ACCESSIBILITY VIA TRANSIT

If fully implemented, the modifications and additions to the regional fixed-route network recommended in this plan will result in improvements to job access, with 28 percent increase of jobs accessible by transit during the morning commute and a 94 percent increase of jobs accessible by transit in the late evening.

Further jobs access gains are also anticipated through mobility service expansion and as a result increased density around mobility hubs and transit routes.

Although the majority of local transit users ride transit to get to work, the Kansas City region has low jobs accessibility via transit compared to other U.S. cities. The Smart Moves Planning team received a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant in 2014 to identify ways to increase the number of jobs accessible by transit.

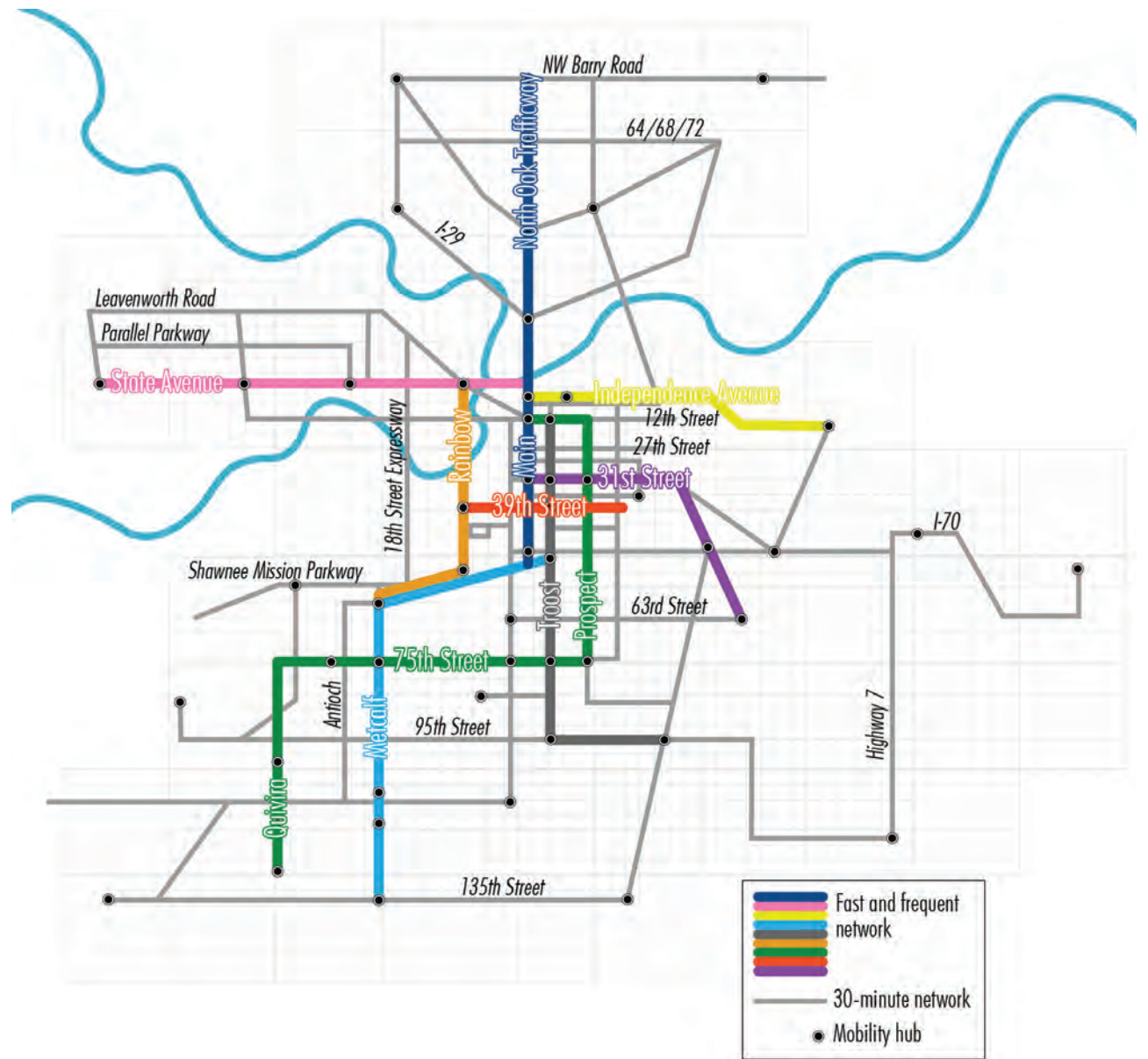
3 RECOMMENDATIONS

FIXED-ROUTE TRANSIT

Fixed route refers to traditional transit service provided by a vehicle such as a bus or a streetcar on a regular route. The recommendations that pertain to fixed route service in this plan are broken into three phases: near term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years) and long term (10-20 years). This plan provides a framework for fixed route service as follows:

- + **Fast and frequent service:** A “spine” where transit service comes every 15 minutes or less.
- + **Supportive service:** Service that comes every 30 minutes.
- + **Express service:** Service offered in the morning and evening commute or “peak” hours, transporting riders from the suburbs to downtown and vice versa.

Smart Moves 3.0 recommends 20 new routes, many route extensions, efficiency improvements, extended service hours, and increased days of operation and frequencies across the system.



MOBILITY HUBS AND SERVICES

The plan contains recommendations for a range of mobility hubs and services.

- + **Mobility hubs:** The plan identifies more than 65 locations across the region for mobility hubs — places where different transportation modes come together allowing for easy transfer and that attract employment and a range of housing choices.
- + **Mobility services:** Mobility services like car-share, bike-share, vanpool and microtransit may be used for a full commute or to bridge the gap that often exists between a bus stop and the rider's final destination. This plan recommends expanding existing mobility service options and adding services that currently do not exist in the Kansas City metro.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS

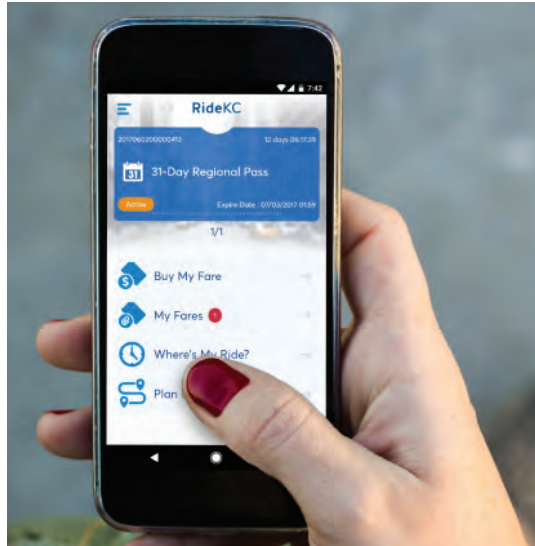
Local governments play a critical role in shaping community environments. The plan offers a menu of recommendations for local government actions that can increase connectivity and focus development in and around mobility hubs and transit corridors. These recommendations encompass policy areas such as:

- + Planning
- + Zoning
- + Parking
- + Economic development
- + Bicycle/pedestrian
- + Employer coordination
- + Housing

Overall, the direction of these recommendations is to increase connectivity and focus development in and around mobility hubs and transit routes.

MOBILITY INNOVATIONS

Technological innovations are changing the way we do everything, including how we move from place to place. Technology has the potential to make our transportation system function more smoothly and expand mobility choices. The plan's recommendations call for the Kansas City region to pilot, explore and implement both technological innovations, such as autonomous transit vehicles, and service concept innovations, including Transportation Management Associations (TMAs).



MARKETING, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Successful transit and mobility service expansion in a historically car-centric region will rely on an informed public and an increased demand for service. Residents and community stakeholders have expressed a strong interest in and need for convenient and affordable service, but are not always aware of current options. Marketing, education and outreach recommendations in the plan identify ways to engage and inform the public, building a better understanding of the benefits of transit and increasing demand.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

One of the many benefits of a strong transit and mobility system is an improvement in local and regional air quality. Dense, mixed-use development around mobility hubs and fast and frequent transit corridors also can help conserve natural resources such as land, water and energy.



FUNDING OPTIONS

Funding of transit and mobility services is always a challenge. Many of the recommendations for system expansion and other improvements in this plan cannot be implemented without additional funding.

The plan offers a county-by-county model for funding, supporting transit service that seamlessly crosses jurisdictional boundaries and provides mobility options for residents who traverse the region daily for work, school and play.



SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety and security of those who use transit and mobility services is of paramount importance. The day-to-day safety of riders has always been a high priority for the region's transit agencies and this plan's recommendations signal that this emphasis should continue. In addition, the plan recommends that the transit agencies explore ways their services can support residents during extreme weather events or man-made or natural disasters.

SYSTEM CONDITION AND PERFORMANCE

As new services are added, funding for overall system maintenance must be continued. The recommendations in this plan emphasize that the transit agencies should continue to maintain vehicles, transit centers and shelters, as well as other infrastructure, in serviceable condition.

In terms of performance, plan recommendations call for continuing routes that operate along a direct path, are well coordinated with other services and are reliable for riders.



For full descriptions of recommendations, including responsibilities and implementations steps, see Section VII: Strategies and Recommendations.

4 IMPLEMENTATION



The Smart Moves 3.0 recommendations focus on a range family of services, including traditional bus services, on-demand and microtransit services, ride-hailing, car-share, bike-share, and non-motorized transportation. This plan proposes a three-phase implementation approach. This approach will ensure that projects are implemented based on priorities identified by the public, stakeholders and transit providers.

The first phase contains projects for immediate implementation in years 0-5. The second phase contains mid-term projects (5-10 years) that build on the projects implemented in the first five years to expand the network and provide greater regional outcomes. The final phase contains projects for implementation in years 10-15, which reflects full build-out of the Smart Moves 3.0 system.

Included in each phase are fixed-route services, demand response (ADA and non-ADA), community-based services and mobility hubs. All phases include the projects/network that precede it. These services are described as “carryover” and evolve over the three phases as some of these routes receive additional service expansions. Each phase and its projects can be found Appendix B.

SMART MOVES 3.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Implementation oversight will be provided by Regional Transit Coordinating Council (RTCC). Strategies include:

- + Expand the scope of Mobility Advisory Committee (MAC).
- + Designate the Sustainable Places Policy Committee (SPPC) to provide oversight of local government and development-related elements.
- + Establish standards and benchmarks for transit and mobility services.
- + Coordinate Smart Moves marketing and education efforts.
- + Continue and coordinate outreach and engagement with major employers.
- + Continue partnerships with educational institutions.
- + Maintain a coordinated list of project priorities to submit for MARC’s sub-allocated program funds.
- + Expand services and general ridership to increase formula funds received.
- + Create a funding task force to develop a road map for sustainable funding structure.
- + Revise the KCATA Bi-State Compact to include taxing authority and an updated board structure that reflects transit demand and funding levels.

References

¹American Public Transportation Association

²KCATA On-board survey

³<http://mopublictransit.org/2017/05/09/apta-announces-2017-bus-safety-security-excellence-awards/>

⁴Victoria Policy Institute