



# Transportation Outlook 2040

## Citizen Discussions: Transportation Outlook

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Sylvester Powell Jr. Community Center  
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Mission, Kan.

### WARM-UP QUESTIONS

*JH: To get you to start thinking about how you travel to places you need to go, how do you get to those places?*

S: Car, bus, bike.

*JH: How do other people who you know get to the places?*

S: Bus, catch a ride, motorcycle, car.

*JH: We want to remind you to think ... of the entire transportation system. People think only usually about transportation [by] car, but [try to] think about different modes of transportation, [such as] those that move materials and goods from place to place. What type of infrastructure needs to be invaluable for humans and goods to be moved in our region?*

S: Highways and rails

S: Airports

*JH: Look at the airports. What type of infrastructure do they need?*

S: Runways, warehouses, service areas, buses, other areas of transportation

*JH: What other things make transportation possible?*

S: Planners, infrastructure both human and material, money

S: Designers and designs

*JH: We are focusing on the transportation decisions and the infrastructure. Think about the whole system and its sustainability to supply the needs of the current generation without compromising the future of the future generations.*

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### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

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## DISCUSSION

*JH: We will be discussing growth and development, environment, transportation and equity.*

*JH: The region is predicted to expand by about a half million more people, and we want to hear from you where those people will be located and the local government agencies should do to help you and your community. How should we spread them out? What is it that the local government decision makers need to do to accommodate those residents?*

S: Sewer systems, waste water treatment, transportation

S: Plan and zone the system. Cities need to plan for greater density and change zoning laws.

S: Focus on older neighborhoods and keep them up to standards so people will move into them and not out of them. If you want people to move back to the core, make it attractive.

S: Growth models need to address energy costs. If we don't address them, they will continue as in the past.

S: [Take into account] alternative sources of energy and how they affect the look of the neighborhoods and the overall design

S: Spending priorities [should] match our goals to reflect the things we desire.

S: Improve our governments all the way around and how the local entities work together – create one giant city-state and the municipalities.

*JH: What do local governments and decision-makers need to do to accommodate new residents?*

S: It ties into your first statement. We need to create a new culture; one not focused on the automobile and half-acre lots. [Population] and [the number of] people 65 and older are growing; 25 percent will be 65 and older—this will change the entire culture and how we live. We have to look at that and how it affects our culture and jobs. Look at what was 20 years ago.

S: Make the companies and the jobs that are going to be created start their cultures where they are located and the demographics of the area will need to be changed to accommodate them.

S: If you want the urban core to become denser, you have to invest more in other community services such as schools. People want to live in these areas [because you can] walk [places] and [there are] other opportunities to discourage the suburban sprawl.

S: Agree on a common set of development assistance. Don't develop anything that will force one area to compete against another. It makes a divisive region... Growth has to pay for itself. The further out you go creates low density and issues. One of the first things is that the sewers go in and then people move in. In Olathe, we can't control our sewer system, and another entity puts sewers in wherever they want to go. Be willing to say "no" to growth and establish growth criteria; "boundaries" is a four-letter word. Invest in sewers in older areas to create more density. Don't invest in greenfields.

S: Create transportation corridors to create more density; some cities are doing it but not all.

S: We have all of these older cities, and each individual city needs to control their own growth and create their own density at a minimum so that any kind of mass transit becomes more efficient. As long as you have individual municipalities and states vying for the same thing, it makes sustainability hard.

S: Maybe provide some incentive for infill development. Sometimes our codes are limited to infill development or other areas of development. Some will say to develop in country because it is cheaper. Need codes updated.

S: Cities need to focus employment to dense areas. If a developer wants to go out, then that should be an issue of transit, and make the development pay for the transit situation.

*JH: Looking regionally and anticipating the new residents and jobs, what needs to happen to connect new residents to new job centers and other areas?*

S: One of the things happening is younger people growing and entering job market. They don't choose the job, they choose the place. As the quality of life increases in other areas, we also need to make our quality of life better.

S: You also have to create housing opportunities that match the jobs. One of the sad things in JoCo is that we don't have anything for police and teachers, etc.; they can't even buy a home here. We need to provide affordable housing to create those opportunities.

S: Cities have to change the way they look at things: zoning and comprehensive planning. Cities want expensive houses for higher taxes, and we have to change legislation.

S: Increased commute distance: Why should we accept that as necessary? We should have a guide so people can find what they have closer to where they live. It gets at the issue of people living closer to things they need like jobs, grocery stores, etc. The people to things they need, the more willing they are to agree to improve transit.

S: It's easy to get around via the grid system and the major corridors that connect and people, but you need transit. [Have transit run on the major thoroughfares of the] grid system, and then the bus system can feed into the transit system.

S: Expand 71 highway south and get growth out there. If you don't put resources in roads, you put them in transit in town, then that will be the problem because they won't be able to afford the time or money to get there.

*JH: Where can resources be added in your communities and the surrounding areas? Where should be [the physical environment be] left alone?*

S: I think WyCo is woefully underdeveloped, and the aging infrastructure and will need outside money to help develop it. The taxes are really high because of low-value poor homes – police and fire protection. [The area] needs to be redeveloped in small parts and mapped out and [so it] still has ... natural areas.

S: One of the areas I think they need to focus on is the existing major roads: pedestrians and cyclists cannot get across them. You are sometimes forced to walk on the street; that is what happened to downtown. You can't walk on streets, [but] sometimes the sidewalks end.

*JH: We will touch more on transportation later, but where in the region should no more development go?*

S: We really need to stop looking at the county and city lines as being boundaries and start working together. Let them not say not to develop, but to support [actions] to make nature areas.

S: Invest resources where we have infrastructure, like older areas, and limit [development in] areas that do not have infrastructure.

S: Areas should use natural resources inventories as their guide to where to develop and build from that; use that as a model [to dictate] how much capacity you can [accommodate] there. See if, in some cases, [you can change the] infrastructure to hold a lot more people. Use those two resources together (existing infrastructure and natural resources inventory) and that will guide you.

S: Sewers: sewer district puts them in and takes away local decisions – should say growth will only occur where the trunk sewer system is today. [Don't] fill up areas that do have adequate sewer systems.

S: I don't like the idea of saying "no;" I like "yes." But let's incentivize people to [use the resources available in older areas and redevelop them, such as by] growing food on the land to get money. [Let's make it good and profitable for them.] Say something positive instead of saying no.

S: It is not easy to build and redevelop sewer systems in older areas.

S: Encourage people to put their houses downtown because of the existing infrastructure.

*JH: Should most new residents live closer to or farther from employment, shopping, schools? Should they live in single-family homes? Can or should they use cars? Will land and road construction become more affordable or [will we need to increase our] density?*

S: I think we need to expand the variety of single family homes; [right now] you have a mansion or an apartment. You have narrow houses on narrow lots, and people need to feel they have the privacy [in more dense areas] that they can have in the less dense areas.

S: I have a hard time telling people where to live. The market is changing, but the governments can choose the zoning for the areas and what will be built.

S: I feel if people want that kind of thing, politically we make them pay their own way – make the developers pay for the access.

S: I think what is happened is that we have a sense of fear. We need to overcome it by building a sense of comfort, and help people feel better in denser communities. Then it will have the ripple effect and people will use fewer cars and won't mind living closer together.

S: A lot of people look at a house as an investment instead of living there. Separate their homes from their investments – more housing choices in between apartments or suburban houses.

*JH: Consider the natural environment within your community and on its outskirts. How should we take into consideration air quality and energy use and [our impact on the] environment?*

S: For specific types of transportation, [find] alternative energy sources.

S: Creating bike lanes and slow-moving vehicle lanes – bikes, scooters, etc.

S: Think very broadly about environment – not just the local environment that might be affected by transportation. We need to think about the entire planet; anything we [do] will have an affect globally.

S: Make better decisions to lessen the distance to travel to work. The goal is to slow the trend.

S: With the high-end fuel costs, there has been a big realization of transportation and infrastructure. There is a lot we can do to invest in public transit and things that are environmentally friendly and energy-conscious.

S: We have developed in areas we shouldn't, and [we're] developing every square inch of it. We need to think how sprawling development are inefficient, and what future generations won't have.

S: Think about public landscaping and streetscaping along major corridors, and not develop the flood plains. Stop people developing next to waterways.

S: We have data and the natural resource inventory in place to use as a guide where we should and should not be building. Use the data [that's] available. Set criteria on soils, geology and the type of information. It is there, and we don't use it because high property tax is considered more important. Private property rights will develop until we decide there is a higher priority.

S: The number one priority needs to be health. We are becoming unhealthy; our children – that is what this discussion is about. The bad air is from the bad transportation in the past. Crime and disease from what we have now.

S: We need to focus on ... multiple land uses; that will help with air quality. It is sometimes technically possible to walk, but [when you have to] walk the length of [several] football fields, it is easier to drive.

S: Educate young kids and our children as to why and what is important and about why we have to clean up our world. We have to teach them that it is actually fun to ride the bus. There is a social stigma of riding the bus. We are not going to clean that world up without changing that.

*JH: What mode would you like to use with more ease or convenience?*

S: This is probably the most bicycle unfriendly metropolitan area in the world. We are forced to use the car to get to some places. That choice affects health, and [that's] a bigger issue [than simply] transportation. We can address health [by getting] the outdoors more often.

S: Incorporating [more] insight planning into parks and recreation facilities. They should connect to bigger facilities and suburban areas ...

S: More bus rapid transit systems to get to necessary areas at 2 a.m. in the morning. Not have to worry about not seeing an event or discussion because can't get there.

S: Sidewalks and curbs on both sides of the roads.

S: Balance of transportation system that includes all modes.

S: I think most agree we need a better transit system, but one of the reasons is to establish some expectations of the future. Avoid believing that transit is going to go everywhere. Focus transit in areas that have sufficient density and traffic and employment, where it will be needed and necessary. Let's have realistic expectations about where transit goes and acknowledge that if we want to use transit, we need to know where it would be most cost-effective.

S: Light rail along busy I-35 corridors, so if you don't want to use a car, you're able to use both modes of system.

S: I keep hearing point A and B as in home and work, but this is unrealistic. We limit the 25,000 places people want to go to 50–75 points that everyone wants to go. Limit the points and invest in those areas. We will have people who will like and not like it; some communities may be left out. You cannot have a paradigm; [you have to] agree that sometimes you have to walk a mile or half a mile to get to transit.

*JH: Are you willing to pay for infrastructure? When you travel around the region, have you ever thought some area needs to be fixed?*

S: [The K-10 route that connects] JoCo Community College with Lawrence was a great idea. [We should be connecting major destinations and taking advantage of common commuter routes.]

S: If you want public transit, you have to invest in more bus system and light rail connections. It does take a major public investment; fares won't take care of public transit system.

S: KU connection falls short because it doesn't connect to the KU Med Center. JoCo doesn't serve WyCo and it could have been useful, but the way the system is organized, it failed a lot of the people that would have used it. Failed people we are trying to serve.

S: Investing in public transportation is sometimes a great savings [because it obviates the need] to invest in roadways and new interchanges. We often fail to realize that public transit system takes a lot of investment, but sometimes driving causes worse.

S: I think in this area we have to pay more for transportation, but we don't have public transit. [We need to] reallocate what we are paying for. The current status of bicycling is not good; piecemeal in Shawnee and Olathe has an unofficial plan [and they are] trying to get something built. We are going on 16 years of incentives from the federal government to do this, but this is all we got. Chicago has a lot more issues, but [they are] years ahead of us in bicycle transportation. Portland, Ore., has gone from the worst to one of the best. We sit here and wonder why we can't get it done. I have been pounding the tables for 20 years.

S: We try to build enough [highway] capacity so we have free-flowing traffic. We spend enough on building that – suggest a project that every single occupant vehicle will pay an access fee. Two or more human beings could go through for free. [If the] prices were adjusted appropriately, we could have the freeway system paid.

S: [If we had public transit, I would have to spend] a lot less of my income on ... owning a car. The population will be more willing to pay a portion of that savings for transit infrastructure.

*JH: People of a different race, disability, etc.: Do they have equal access to transportation system?*

S: I don't think we should think about access to the transportation system. It's two hours from downtown to Village West, but can be done. ... Even if transportation is available, the time is disproportionately fixed to travel distance and time to those places they need to reach.

S: In WyCo a number of [areas] were bisected by a train. Those areas don't have cars, and the bus service won't come. I don't know how that is addressed in terms of major railroads.

S: We don't want to tell people where to live and what to live in, but regarding transportation, we do that already by making people have to move around by car and not providing choices to do otherwise.

S: Specifically in JoCo, the services are not equal, and usually those with disabilities have to book two weeks in advance. [Sometimes people] don't know or can't get to the bus stops; sometimes limited ability to take them. They only run 12 hours a day and not weekends or holidays – only through certain areas. Very limited access to public transit and need to rely on other forms of transportation.

*JH: Should businesses that use the transportation system frequently pay a larger share? Develop equally to maintenance. Which communities benefit the most?*

S: Which community should contribute the most; that is where you get into competition. Transportation should be funded by more dedicated funding; eliminate the competition between the cities.

S: I think the answers will change after the intermodal facility is built – that will move about 5,000 trucks a day. (BNSF Gardner). Four million square feet of distribution space in Olathe and Gardner sits between us. I think they will receive the lion's share of investments for the transportation system. They are already making huge investments and increasing the highways – change the feel of the highways. I have not seen demonstrated what parts of the costs are going to be borne by this company. This will become huge costs and tax payers are paying a lot to support that facility.

*JH: Should be analyzed more?*

S: Amount of traffic generated and costs for maintenance. Who bears the cost of that?

S: People who live close to major freeways in Jackson and Wyandotte counties should pay disproportionate costs – the people who grossly underpay use our regional system for a long commute. The health and environment costs are to those who live near the highways and the benefits to those who live farther away.