

2.0 POLICY FRAMEWORK

The success and vitality of the Kansas City region depends on how it grows, develops and evolves in the coming years. Quality of life will continue to be defined by a range of lifestyle choices, the health of the natural and built environment, and access to jobs, housing options, and community goods and services.

Greater Kansas City's quality of life in 2040 will not be the result of any single decision, jurisdiction or variable. The region's ability to succeed is based on the aggregate choices that area leaders make over time. Informed choices that develop integrated, collaborative, transportation-related solutions to advance a shared, regional vision will optimize limited resources, create stronger communities and take meaningful strides towards a sustainable, prosperous future.

As part of the update process, key stakeholders, committees and staff modified the plan's original nine goals, added a new goal and introduced categories that align with those used in the Creating Sustainable Places initiative — vibrant, connected and green.

New challenges

The Kansas City region is known for its affordability, vibrant urban and suburban communities, and a range of big-city amenities with small-town character. While the region boasts many positive qualities, it, like much of the nation, is grappling with a range of complex challenges. Greater Kansas City is experiencing a slow recovery from a depressed economy, an aging road and bridge network, an aging population, changing climate, fluctuating energy prices and dwindling financial resources.

Greater Kansas City covers a large, low-density geographic area, resulting in:

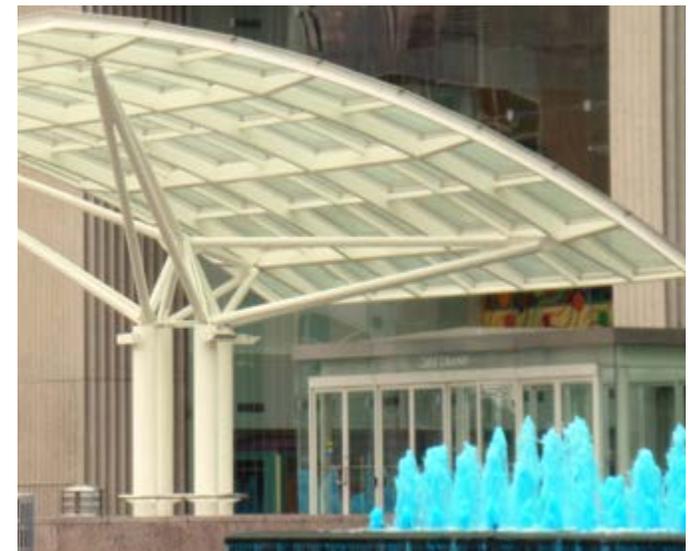
- A spread-out infrastructure network that requires construction and maintenance.
- Challenges in providing active transportation services.
- Lack of connectivity among of jobs, services and housing.

Regional vision:

Greater Kansas City is a sustainable region that increases the vitality of our society, economy and environment for current residents and future generations.

Transportation vision:

A safe, balanced, regional, multimodal transportation system that coordinates with land-use planning, supports equitable access to opportunities and protects the environment.



Area residents are primarily dependent on the single-passenger automobile, which results in:

- Limited investment in travel alternatives.
- Higher-than-average cost of transportation as a percent of household budgets.
- Increased sensitivity and vulnerability to energy price changes.

The region faces significant environmental challenges that include:

- Public health impacts related to air and water quality and physical environments.
- Climate change impacts from carbon dioxide and regional vehicle miles traveled.
- Loss of critical natural habitats and environmentally sensitive lands.

Local, national and global dynamics require a clear forward-leaning vision regarding the region, its infrastructure and the social, environmental and economic capacities. Plans must be created in a more holistic, integrated manner for a successful future.

Policy framework

Plan goals

As Greater Kansas City faces the future, it must determine a clear direction to answer the evolving challenges facing the region. In 2009, the MARC Board of Directors adopted a regional vision for a more vibrant, connected and green region. The plan policy framework helps define the role of transportation in achieving this vision.

The policy framework serves as the foundation of the long-range transportation plan and directs the development of objectives, strategies and key measures to track regional progress over time. Additionally, the policy framework plays an important role in articulating the region's position on state and federal transportation investments and legislation.

Vibrant	 Economic vitality Support an innovative, competitive 21st-century economy.
	 Placemaking Coordinate transportation and land-use investment along the region's corridors and centers as a means to create vibrant places and strengthen the quality of the region.
	 Equity Ensure all people have the opportunity to thrive.
Connected	 Transportation choices Expand affordable, accessible, multimodal transportation options in order to better connect residents and visitors to jobs and services.
	 Safety and security Improve safety and security for all transportation users.
	 System condition Ensure transportation systems are maintained in good condition.
	 System performance Manage existing systems to achieve reliable and efficient performance and maximize the value of existing investments.
Green	 Public health Facilitate healthy, active living.
	 Environment Protect and restore our region's natural resources (land, water and air) through proactive environmental stewardship.
	 Climate change and energy use Decrease the use of fossil fuels through reduced travel demand, technology advancements and a transition to renewable energy sources.