

Transportation Outlook 2040

Trend Analysis: Phase 1 Public Engagements

- 1. Our region's population will increase by about 500,000 people in the next 30 years. Imagine that 5,000 of those people move into your community. What things will your city or county government need to do (over time) in order to accommodate those 5,000 new residents?**

Participants suggested that government will have major roles to play in determining the nature and character of investments made to accommodate an influx of people into the region. Major investments in infrastructure will need to be made. Where those investments are made will impact where people will live. Upgrades to sewer systems, waste treatment and transportation systems were cited as areas that should receive investment to accommodate a growing population.

Participants clearly are looking toward government to provide a planning function. Participants tended to call for local governments to plan for higher density, infill development, and transportation (transit) systems to serve densely populated areas. Participants tended to express a perceived need for government entities to work closer together to limit sprawl, create density, and provide affordable (sustainable) transportation services to the region.

It was suggested that social issues like quality education and public safety will need to be improved to make infill and denser development successful. An observation was made that a "new culture" needed to be created to support changes in the way we as a society live.

- 2. Along with more people, we'll see about 250,000 new jobs created in the next 30 years. Imagine that about 2,000 of those jobs are located in your community. What will your city or county government need to do (over time) in order to accommodate 2,000 additional workers?**

Participants recognized that local governments need to plan for the influx of jobs, just as they must plan for an increasing population. Many of the responses to this question dealt with concepts and issues that are compatible with mixed use development. A general trend was detected that suggests participants would like to see a focus on redevelopment of existing buildings and neighborhoods rather than seeing investments made in green fields on the outskirts of the metro area.

An observation was made that younger people are choosing place over job when entering the job market. Transit and alternative transportation choice is important to these workers,

Government, economic development, and planning policies should promote locating additional services (public and private) in denser areas to serve the growing population.

- 3. What impacts might these new residents or workers have on your community?**

Participants pointed out that these increases would have a great impact on existing infrastructure; creating need for more maintenance and perhaps expansion. They felt that density would increase and cause congestion. It was also noted that more people and jobs would create higher property values and investment in communities.

- 4. Five thousand new residents have also moved into each of the cities closest to yours, and some of those people work, shop and recreate in your city. What needs to**

happen in order to connect the residents of other cities with the places they need and want to go?

Items three and four tended to overlap. See responses to number three.

5. *What I want to know is where should we be investing public transportation money?*

Responses to this question tended to be based on the local situation of respondents. General consensus seemed to be that public investment in transportation should not continue to be solely spent on new and existing roads. There seems to be wide spread support for increasing investment in alternative transportation systems such as public transport including some form of rail.

6. *Between now and 2040 what types of communities and neighborhoods to you think people will be looking for?*

Respondents tended to identify community and neighborhood characteristics that were less dependent on personal vehicles. These characteristics included neighborhoods that supported bicycles, and walking. Some felt that less and less need to travel great distances to shop and obtain services would be needed, even if that meant more shopping on line and less travel outside of homes to work. Participants felt that they wanted safety and comfort from their communities. Privacy continues to be a big issue for most respondents; however that seemed to be less of an issue for those on the younger side of the age scale.

Environment Questions:

1. *Consider the natural environment that is part of and surrounds your community. When we think about adding additional transportation options as we were just discussing, how should we take into consideration:*

Public transportation was recognized as an important strategy for reducing transportation related environmental impacts. Additional suggestions included alternative energy powered vehicles, better planned and managed traffic flow. It was suggested that tax policy and other government policies should be changed to reduce or remove incentives to own and drive private vehicles. Alternative forms of transport like bikes and walking were also identified as options that have little or no environmental impact.

2. *How concerned are you about emissions from cars, trucks and other vehicles?*

Generally responses to this question recognized the dangers of emissions and connections to global climate change. However, answers also tended to accept that there was very little individuals and organizations can do to change emissions. The issue of emissions seemed to be of a proportion greater than can be effectively dealt with without a complete societal change.

3. *Is how much energy your transportation habits consume important to you?*

Related to emissions, energy consumption is recognized as a general threat to society and the earth. There is greater support for developing alternative energy sources rather than reducing consumption. However, respondents seemed to recognize energy consumption as a major issue that needs to be dealt with.

Transportation Questions:

1. ***What modes of transportation would you like to be able to use with more ease/convenience in your community?***

Much of the discussions revolved around ways of making the existing bus system better, by increasing frequency of service, longer service hours, and expanding routes and destinations served. Significant discussion was also had about light rail and other forms of public transportation. Bike riders frequently cited that using a bike to get around Kansas City is inconvenient and dangerous.

2. ***Can you identify any transportation projects undertaken over the past few years that you feel were a waste of money? Explain why you feel the way you do.***

Comments included observations on how much money has been spent on road construction and maintenance. Some specific road segments were identified as being poorly designed or managed causing traffic flow problems. The Grandview triangle and Highway 71 seemed to attract criticism at multiple meetings. A generally held sentiment was expressed by a participant by linking the construction of roads and lanes to reduce traffic congestion tended to increase use therefore in the long-run increasing traffic congestion.

3. ***Give me some examples of transportation projects that would reduce your spending on transportation.***

Bike trails, sidewalks and ride sharing were identified as transportation investments that would reduce personal transportation spending.

4. ***When you travel around the region, do you ever think to yourself, “they should fix that?” or “make that work better”? What should we fix or make better?***

Again, the Grandview triangle and Highway 71 were identified as transportation systems that were not working as well as they could be. Bikers said that it was impossible to get across the river on bicycle.

Equity

1. ***Does a person of a different race than you, living in your community, have equal access to your community’s transportation system?***

Participants generally recognized that people of color tend to be lower income and live in areas that are underserved. However there was a large percentage of people how answered this question in terms of handicaps and other barriers to transportation. Some criticism was leveled at the conveners of the meetings, noting that most participants were white. Some interesting conversations were spurred by this question dealing with a general over-reliance on personal vehicles.

2. ***Should businesses that use the transportation system frequently or impact its condition more than the average user pay a larger share to maintain and develop the system?***

There was general consensus that those have a greater impact on the roads should bear the greater burden of maintaining those roads. However, some contended that this system was already in place while others were not so sure that it was adequate.

3. *Do you think the communities surrounding you contribute equally to the development and maintenance of transportation?*

In the most general terms, respondents felt there was an inequality. Participants cited Johnson County as an example of a region that is, and will be increasingly benefiting from regional transportation infrastructure, but may not be paying its fair share of maintaining the infrastructure not in their jurisdiction by which it benefits.

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