What should our transportation system look like between now and 2050?

CONNECTED KC 2050 is the metropolitan transportation plan for Greater Kansas City. It provides a policy framework for the investment of anticipated federal, state and local funds based on anticipated needs and regional goals and objectives through the year 2050. The plan contains:

- **Vision** — a long-term vision for the region’s transportation system.
- **Goals and strategies** — what the region wants to achieve and how we plan to do it.
- **Transportation projects** — major regional transportation investments that help accomplish goals.

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CONNECTED KC 2050

• Promotes compact land use growth policies along with focused transportation investments to support growth and redevelopment in activity centers and along major regional transportation corridors.

• Identifies a set of broad overarching strategies that play an important role in realizing our regional vision.
  - Focus energy on centers and corridors
  - Promote climate protection and resilience
  - Find new funding sources
  - Prioritize investments
  - Leverage data and technology

• Sets performance measures around each policy goal area and highlights need to set targets in key areas, in order to track progress towards meeting these goals.

• Provides a financial forecast that indicates large parts of our region lack funding to invest in the multimodal projects needed to accomplish our goals. In some areas, without new revenues, our region will struggle to maintain the current system in optimal condition.

• Assesses potential funding mechanisms to maintain the system in optimal condition and advance projects that help achieve regional vision and goals.

• Identifies regionally significant projects aligned with the region’s vision and goals that our region should reasonably be expected to advance in the future. This slate of projects includes a large number of system preservation and rehabilitation projects, complete streets and growth of our regional bike network and MetroGreen trail system.

• Identifies more than $52 billion in anticipated revenues and expenditures, as well as +$7 billion in unfunded needs through 2050.

• Strengthens the role of complete streets and travel demand management measures, and adds renewed rigor to expansion of roadway capacity projects in the absence of congestion concerns.

• Envisions limited transit investments due to financial constraints. However, the plan identifies these as high priority for advancement if new funding can materialize.

• Lays a foundation for future planning work.
PLANNING FOR UNCERTAINTY

Long-range planning requires the ability to predict how our population will grow, where we will live and work, and what we will want from our community. We are experiencing profound shifts in economic forces, demographics, technology, climate change and extreme weather events. The impact of these forces and how they will interact is unclear.

Connected KC 2050 used scenario planning to:

• Examine key forces and trends.
• Anticipate potential impacts (positive and negative) on land use, infrastructure, mobility, housing, economic growth, the workforce, social equity, public health and the environment.
• Reconfirm and then refresh the regional vision.
• Create a policy framework for regional plans.

As an initial step, we attempted to anticipate what the future might bring, identify emerging forces and discuss their potential impacts. What opportunities do these emerging driving forces create that we should leverage to advance our march towards our vision? What challenges do we need to be ready to adapt to? Through this work, we identified the following set of forces as the most likely and significant:

Demographic changes
Economic changes
Climate changes
Technological changes

The scenario planning discussion suggested the elevation of certain concepts:

• Focus on people as well as place.
• It is important to be resilient in the face of certain change with unforeseeable impacts.
• Our vision must will allow us to become more nimble and create plans that can more easily adapt to changing circumstance.
VISION

Connected KC 2050 seeks to advance a shared vision for our region — one that balances a thriving economy, social equity and a healthy environment, meeting today’s needs without compromising the needs of future generations.

Greater Kansas City is a region of opportunity. Its robust economy, healthy environment and social capacity support the creativity, diversity and resilience of its people, places and communities.

Formed at the confluence of rivers, trails and trains on the border of two states, Greater Kansas City is a place of interconnection, where people of all backgrounds are welcome and where commerce and ideas flow as freely as the rivers and streams that run through and define it.

Our people thrive here, in safe, walkable and well-maintained neighborhoods. We have abundant opportunities for education, and work in fulfilling jobs at businesses that can compete with any in the world. We enjoy, protect and preserve our region’s natural beauty. We care for our neighbors and our communities. We lead by example. Our region has the strength to not only bounce back from adversity, but bounce forward, confidently, into the future.

A CHANGING REGION

Greater Kansas City is a region that continues to change. The population is growing older and becoming more racially diverse. The residents of the region are looking for more choices for transportation, housing and employment.

Currently, the region is home to 2 million people — and that number is expected to grow by 23% over the coming decades to a little more than 2.5 million residents in 2050. In addition, employment will grow by more than 250,000 jobs, an increase of 21%.

As the region’s population increases and changes, infrastructure needs will also change. Connected KC 2050’s goals are designed to help meet the needs of area residents in the coming years.

The plan’s goal is to make smart decisions — strategic investments with high impact — for the best use of limited funds. Local, national and global dynamics require a clear, forward-leaning vision for the region that better integrates transportation planning with social, environmental and economic factors.
WHAT WE WANT

The plan’s goals serve as the foundation and direct the development of objectives, strategies and key measures to track regional progress over time. The plan describes five desired outcomes or major policy goals as follows:

- **Access to opportunity** — Support a connected system that enables access to all activities, allowing people to succeed by removing transportation barriers.

- **Public health and safety** — Foster healthy communities and individuals by providing safe and secure places to live, walk, bike, ride the bus and drive with clean air to breathe.

- **Healthy environment** — Prioritize and support investments that reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and preserve and restore ecosystem health.

- **Transportation choices** — Provide a range of transportation choices for communities across the region to allow for ease of travel as well as public health and environmental benefits.

- **Economic vitality** — Maintain a multimodal transportation system that supports the efficient movement of people and goods and promotes economic development.

HOW WE’LL GET THERE

Throughout the planning process, we identified a set of broader strategies that play an important role in realizing our regional vision:

- **Focus on centers and corridors** — Focus energy around key activity centers and the corridors that connect them to help promote livable, vibrant, resilient and adaptable places.

- **Climate protection and resilience** — Take a multi-pronged approach to building resilience and reducing climate risks to transportation infrastructure and area communities while also ensuring that the transportation system’s impact on the climate decreases significantly over time.

- **New funding sources** — Consider new or additional funding streams to promote regional transportation projects and services.

- **Prioritize investments** — Invest in projects that incorporate more than one strategy and bring benefits to the most people, making our limited resources go further.

- **Data and technology** — Incorporate data-driven transportation planning into plans and programs.
FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

The region may be at a crossroads about what we choose to fund on the future transportation system and how we fund it. There are predicted shortfalls in traditional funding sources that feed the surface transportation program. The need to operate and maintain the transportation system at acceptable levels requires larger and larger financial commitment.

Federally and regionally, we are faced with a choice between finding new sources of income or possibly settling for smaller programs that may look very different from the ones currently in place. The region may need to use more local resources to complete regional projects than in the past. States and the region will need to implement new funding strategies that support regional, state and national priorities. The region will need to make significant decisions about the best way to balance priorities, needs, wants and expectations based on limited funding resources.

One primary purpose of the long-range plan is to provide policy guidance on priorities for how we use regional transportation resources. Decisions about allocating resources to different uses within the plan are significant and should impact actual funding decisions made for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as well as other state and local programs. The financial plan presents reasonable expectations of future transportation revenues needed to implement financially constrained projects in Connected KC 2050.

NEW REVENUES

Connected KC 2050 provides estimates for revenue generating potential for various mechanisms, in order to be able to maintain system in optimal condition and also advance projects which help regional achieve regional vision and goals.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Connected KC 2050 will impact all of MARC’s future transportation planning work. The plan highlights areas we will focus on in the next five years.