

II. Introduction

Smart Moves is metropolitan Kansas City’s vision and implementation plan to enhance and expand regional transit and mobility services in the years and decades ahead. This plan serves as a guide for transit providers and local governments to implement transit and mobility services in a way that addresses some of our region’s greatest challenges and takes advantage of new opportunities. The plan’s concepts and recommendations lead to a bolder approach that is adaptive to the many distinct and diverse parts of the region, that inspires innovative solutions, and that leverages partnerships across sectors and disciplines. Smart Moves, an initiative that began nearly 15 years ago, builds on prior planning efforts and integrates common goals to ensure a high-functioning, seamless experience for the region’s residents and visitors, a healthy environment, a thriving economy, and a better quality of life for everyone.

The Smart Moves Initiative: A Brief History

The Smart Moves initiative began in 2002 with a 20-year service plan designed to increase transit service in the region to a level comparable with peer metropolitan areas. With local support and working in partnership with the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Unified Government Transit and Johnson County, MARC led the development of a new policy direction for transit and paratransit services. Largely a bus-based plan, the first Smart Moves proposed a system of “Rapid Riders,” “Freeway Flyers,” “Local Links” and “Special Services.” In order to implement the plan (projected cost of \$155 million in 2003), a regional investment fund concept was developed to replace local sales tax and general funds that still support transit today. The fund would be generated through a regional investment district enabled by Kansas and Missouri legislation allowing local communities to jointly raise funds for a regional transit system. The legislation would have allowed area counties to levy up to ½-cent sales tax.

The first Smart Moves plan was adopted in 2005. Since then, local progress and momentum have grown steadily as transportation costs have continued to rise. This momentum was illustrated by the completion of the MAX bus rapid transit service on Main Street along with many other local and regional milestones. The regional investment fund concept was put on hold after the enabling legislation was passed in Missouri but not in Kansas.

How This Plan is Organized

The Smart Moves plan is organized to serve as a guide for implementation. Each subsequent section of the plan is designed to be a shareable, stand-alone document. Together, the sections tell a story about transit and mobility as it exists today and how these types of services will evolve in the future.

Plan Sections:

- **Introduction**
Provides context and vision for the plan
- **Existing Conditions**
Explains transit and mobility services today
- **Gap Analysis**
Explains major service gaps addressed by this plan
- **Defining the Smart Moves System**
Provides a detailed description of Smart Moves 3.0 system
- **Recommendations and Performance Monitoring**
Provides specific recommendations for transit and mobility services and development
- **Implementation**
Provides implementation strategies to achieve recommendations
- **Appendices**
Provides more detailed background and analysis information and mobility hub toolkit.

By this time, several corridor studies were underway and more local communities had begun to incorporate transit into their local plans and community visions. In response to this increasing interest in regional transit services, the Smart Moves planning team initiated an update to the original Smart Moves plan.

Framed as a vision, the Smart Moves update sought to develop a service framework to help coordinate local and regional transit planning efforts already underway; provide a way to reflect and build on newly developed local plans, strategies, and studies; and evaluate the possibilities of light rail and other transit technologies. In 2008, after an extensive public engagement and a vision vetting process with local governments, the Smart Moves Update was adopted. Further planning led to the development of specific implementation plans to supplement the Smart Moves Regional Transit Vision.

To learn more about past Smart Moves plans and other transit efforts, visit the online plan archive at kcsmartmoves.org.

Developing Smart Moves 3.0: Regional Transit and Mobility Plan

In 2014, MARC, KCATA and Johnson County were awarded a USDOT TIGER grant to develop a strategic implementation plan that would double the number of jobs accessible by transit in the region over the next 10 years. While jobs access had always been a large driver in the Smart Moves initiative, a Brookings Institute report entitled *Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in*

Metropolitan America (2011) shed new light on how significant the region’s jobs access problem really was. This report ranked the Kansas City region 90th among the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the country, concluding that only 18.3 percent of jobs in the region are accessible by transit within 90 minutes. While the analysis included jobs in all 14 counties in the Kansas City metropolitan statistical area, the percentage was still eye-opening for MARC, regional transit providers and elected leaders alike.

PLANNING SUCCESSES

2002	Smart Moves initiative begins
2005	<i>Smart Moves Transit Plan</i> Adopted
2005	Main Street MAX Bus Rapid Transit route begins
2008	<i>Smart Moves Regional Transit Vision</i> adopted
2010	Smart Moves Implementation Plan developed
2010	TIGER grant provides funds to build three new transit centers and transit infrastructure
2011	Troost Avenue MAX BRT opens
2015	RideKC regional brand adopted, with a new regional fare pass and a common eligibility process for ADA paratransit riders
2016	Main Street Streetcar service begins
2017	Smart Moves Regional Transit and Mobility Plan (Smart Moves 3.0) adopted
2019	Anticipated launch date for Prospect MAX BRT

MARC began a closer analysis of the issue within the seven-county transit service area to better understand where major job-access gaps existed and what specific challenges workers and employers were facing. Quickly, planners came to the conclusion that since growth and development patterns were an integral part of the problem, a new regional approach to the provision of transit and mobility services was needed. This new approach needed to include flexible new solutions to serve the region's low-density developed areas, along with an organizing framework for transit-supportive and transit-oriented development to bring jobs and housing closer to existing transit service.

Defining Transit and Mobility Services

Transit is the common term for public transportation, which includes both fixed route and demand response services.

Mobility services are broader and include rideshare, car-share, bike-share, microtransit and pedestrian accommodations.

This new approach is embodied in this plan, which updates the regional vision for transit, proposes an updated service concept, and provides recommendations and action steps to increase access to opportunity, promote economic development, and become more competitive with peer metros.

The Smart Moves planning team established the following objectives as the planning process got underway:

1. Develop a strategic investment plan that will substantially increase jobs access by transit in the next 10 years.
2. Address land-use and growth challenges that impact the ability to provide transportation choices.
3. Integrate land use and development policies and practices into transit planning in order to generate transit-supportive and transit-oriented development, leverage economic benefits of transit, increase ridership, and support overall access.
4. Integrate new technologies into transit and mobility planning, including technology available for mobile information, fare payment and automated vehicles.
5. Create strategies and guidelines for better connection of fixed route and paratransit service with other mobility service options to support first- and last- mile transportation.
6. Engage a broad set of stakeholders, including those most impacted by transit access.
7. Create an implementation and funding strategy supported by the public and community leaders.

Smart Moves Vision and Goals

Vision

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

Goals

The goals of the Smart Moves 3.0 plan parallel the planning framework those of Transportation Outlook 2040, the region's metropolitan transportation plan.

1. Economic Vitality
Build and sustain a thriving, innovative, and competitive economy.
2. Placemaking

Coordinate investment in transit, mobility services and land use along transit corridors and mobility hubs.

3. Equity

Ensure all people have the opportunity to thrive by providing equal access to jobs, goods, and services.

4. Transportation Choices

Expand mobility options to better connect residents and visitors to jobs and services.

5. Safety and Security

Ensure safe, comfortable, and convenient access to services.

6. System Condition

Ensure transit and mobility systems are maintained in good condition.

7. System Performance

Manage the existing systems to achieve reliable and efficient performance and maximize the value of existing investments.

8. Public Health

Facilitate healthy, active living.

9. Environment

Improve air quality and conserve natural resources through increased use of transit and mobility services as well as through transit oriented development.

10. Climate Change and Energy Use

Decrease fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency, alternative and renewable fuels and VMT reduction.