Draft Network Plan
Introduction and Summary
RideKC Next is a comprehensive redesign of transit service in Kansas City, Mo.

What is RideKC Next?
This effort is reviewing the purpose and performance of all transit services offered within Kansas City, MO (KCMO). This includes:

- All current MAX and KC Streetcar routes.
- The following RideKC fixed and flexible (“flex”) bus routes:
  - Routes numbered 1 to 99 (KCMO South)
  - Routes numbered 201 to 299 (Northland).
  - Peak-only and limited routes serving outer suburban locations still in KCMO, such as Routes 340, 535 and 571.

Because the boundaries of Kansas City, MO are so fragmented, some of these bus routes also operate in or immediately next to other jurisdictions, especially North Kansas City, Gladstone, Raytown and Kansas City, KS (KCK).

How does this relate to the zero-fare plan?
The City of Kansas City, MO is engaged in an effort to find alternate funding sources to replace the approximately $8 million per year that KCATA currently collects in KCMO with a new funding source.

RideKC Next is a separate effort focused specifically on network design, meaning where and how often buses run, regardless of whether or not those buses collect fares.

Because fares cover only a small part of the cost of operating transit in Kansas City (less than 10%), the key questions that drive network design, meaning where and how often buses run, regardless of whether or not those buses collect fares.

Why redesign the bus network?
Most transit agencies review their system’s performance in depth every five to ten years. The last such review by KCATA was the 2012/2013 Comprehensive Service Analysis. RideKC Next was prompted by evidence that the bus network is not matching the purposes and expectations of the community. For example:

- Transit doesn’t provide enough access to opportunity. Infrequent service and long distances mean that bus trips are much longer than driving. On a typical weekday morning, the average Kansas City area resident can reach fewer than 50,000 jobs in an hour of travel by transit. In contrast, driving for up to an hour opens up over 1 million jobs.

- Suburbanization is making it harder for transit to be useful. Increasingly dispersed development means that there are constantly new neighborhoods and employment areas that transit cannot reach with current resources. Even serving existing far-flung suburban centers requires buses to travel long distances through areas where few people ride. This is expensive, and reduces the frequency and usefulness of bus service in the denser core of the city.

- Ridership has been declining. Weekday ridership on routes operated by KCATA declined by 24% from 2012 to 2018, from 54,000 to 45,000 boardings per day. In any year, it is normal for ridership to increase or decrease by several percent for a variety of reasons, like gas prices or changes in the local economy. But a sustained decrease over multiple years suggests a problem.

- A first step toward a long-term vision: fast and frequent transit, better connected to other mobility options. SmartMoves 3.0, developed as a joint regional effort by KCATA and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is Kansas City’s long-range transit vision. It includes plans for fast and frequent corridors throughout the region. Those corridors would be supported by improved connections to other modes, like cycling and ridesharing. Redesigning the bus network today is an opportunity to begin integrating SmartMoves concepts, to the extent possible with existing funding sources.

What’s in the Draft Network?

- What's in the Draft Network?

| 4 | RideKC Next
Draft Network Plan |
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- Same amount of service, but a higher priority on expanding ridership.
- A frequent grid, seven days a week, to connect more people to opportunity.
  - 19% more people would live within a 1/2 mile of a frequent route. Upgraded East-West frequent service on 12th, 39th, and 47th Streets.
  - All frequent routes would have service every 15 minutes or better on weekdays and Saturdays, every 20 minutes or better on Sundays.
  - In an hour or less, the average KCMO resident could reach 7% more jobs on weekdays, and 22% more jobs on Saturdays on transit.
- A simpler, easier and more efficient network.
  - Flex service expanded to more locations North of the Missouri river.
  - Fewer routes 1/4 mile apart or less connecting the same neighborhoods to Downtown.
- Routes with fewer than 200 riders per day removed or substantially redesigned.
- Nine fewer routes, but the network would still serve 99% of the places it serves today.
- Retaining options for those who need transit the most. Number of low-income residents within 1/2 mile of service essentially unchanged.

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1 Owen, A. and Murphy, B. Access Across America: Transit 2017 and Access Across America: Auto 2017. Accessibility Observatory, Center for Transportation Studies, University of Minnesota. Available at: [http://cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/pdfdownload.pl?id=2944](http://cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/pdfdownload.pl?id=2944) and [http://cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/pdfdownload.pl?id=2918](http://cts.umn.edu/Publications/ResearchReports/pdfdownload.pl?id=2918). Note that these are regional numbers, and job access by transit is higher for the average KCIMO resident.
Why focus only on KCMO?
Transportation issues in Kansas City are regional, and go beyond the scope of any one jurisdiction. The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority was established in this vein in 1966, to provide transit service in seven counties spanning Kansas and Missouri. And the RideKC regional network brand follows in this spirit as well.

But transit funding does not reflect this reality. Sales taxes collected in KCMO contribute nearly 80% of the region’s local transit funds. As a result, the overwhelming majority of service is provided in KCMO. Bus routes from other jurisdictions are often designed around the best places to connect to the KCMO network.

Transit is also more relevant in the areas with the densest concentrations of people and jobs, which are mostly in KCMO. Transit is about meeting the needs of many riders at the same time. The more people live and work near a bus route, the more useful it becomes. This means transit is most useful in walkable areas developed at higher densities.

In 2018, about 90% of transit boardings in the Kansas City region were in KCMO. Kansas City, MO residents board the bus or streetcar about 20 times per year on average. In contrast, Johnson County residents board the bus just once per year on average.

Long-term regional transportation plans recognize the need for a dedicated regional funding source for transit. SmartMoves 3.0 includes a network of fast and frequent corridors that go far beyond the core of KCMO. And KCATA’s 2019-2021 Strategic Plan has identified specific actions within the transit agency to help move in this direction.

But even in the best case scenario it will take several years before any new funding sources become available. Recognizing this, RideKC Next is looking for meaningful improvements that can be made in the next two years.

The types of changes under consideration include changing the routing, hours of service and frequencies of all fixed and flexible bus routes.

2 RideKC Next is not focusing on the performance or design of complementary paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and provided through Ride KC Freedom. However, KCATA recognizes that changes to fixed routes and general public on-demand services may impact the areas where ADA paratransit service is required by law. KCATA is committed to proceeding with caution to minimize any potential impact of network changes on paratransit customers.

Figure 1: Map of the existing RideKC transit network in core areas of Kansas City. In this map, routes are color-coded by frequency, where the most frequent routes are in red (every 15 minutes or better), followed by dark blue (every 30 minutes) and light blue (every 40 to 60 minutes). Areas served by Flex routes are shown in light brown.
Figure 2: Map of the existing RideKC transit network in core and outlying areas of Kansas City, MO. In this map, routes are color-coded by frequency, where the most frequent routes are in red (every 15 minutes or better), followed by dark blue (every 30 minutes) and light blue (every 40 to 60 minutes). Areas served by Flex routes are shown in light brown.
What goals and priorities should the transit network reflect?

RideKC Next is about the improvements that can be made in the next two years. That means some bigger picture decisions may need to wait.

For example, we can’t assume a significant change in the funding environment, so any changes that come out of this effort can’t require new revenue sources.

Similarly, although KCATA is actively working on improving the efficiency of service delivery, it’s unlikely that the basic costs of providing transit will change drastically in the next two years.

That means this effort is budget- and cost-neutral. We have to assume that the resources available are the ones available today.

This is important, because it means any decision to start investing more in one type of service is a decision to invest less in another type of service. So what is more important?

This page summarizes the key choices that drive the network redesign, and the outcomes from consulting the public and stakeholders on these choice in the summer of 2019.

Further details on this public outreach process and its results are provided in Chapter 2, starting on page 16.

Key Choice no. 1: Ridership vs. Coverage

KCATA must balance the competing expectations that transit will be provided in most of the city, but also that bus routes must meet a minimum level of usefulness and efficiency. How do we achieve the correct balance between these two opposing goals?

Pursuing high ridership means focusing frequent, useful service on places where many people go. Service focused on ridership:

- Expands economic and other opportunities available by transit.
- Limits growth in car traffic, congestion and pollution.
- Requires frequent routes in core, denser areas of the city.
- Reduces the amount of public subsidy required for transit. High ridership routes have the lowest cost per trip provided.

Pursuing extensive coverage means reaching as many places as possible at low frequency. Service focused on coverage:

- Ensures every neighborhood has access to the transit system.
- Provides lifeline access to critical services for all.
- May take different forms, including low-frequency bus routes, or on-demand or flexible services.
- Doesn’t provide a viable transportation option for most people. As a result, coverage services have a higher cost per trip provided than services focused on ridership.

In existing service, about 50% of transit resources in KC are spent on maximizing ridership, and 50% are spent on coverage.

Based on the results of public and stakeholder outreach in June and July of 2019, this Draft Plan is built on the assumption that transit service in KC should shift slightly toward the ridership goal and slightly away from the coverage goal.

Under the Draft Plan, about 60% of KC transit resources would be spent on ridership, and 40% would be spent on coverage.

Key Choice no. 2: What Should The Main Purpose of Coverage Service Be?

The effectiveness of coverage service is typically measured by the number of people and jobs near service. For example, we might measure the percentage of the KC residents within 1/2 mile of some service. The basic goal of coverage service is to keep that number high, even if ridership is low.

Even so, there is more than one reason to provide coverage service, and the goals for coverage service inform what KCATA should provide. When people ask for coverage service, it tends to be for two main reasons:

- Service to areas where people need it more. Coverage-oriented transit provides a transportation option to people with few other choices, when they are located in places where high-ridership service would not go. This includes places like:
  - Isolated lower-income communities where vehicle ownership rates are low;
  - Senior living communities in suburban areas; and
  - Employers, schools or social service offices located in places that are difficult for transit to serve efficiently.

- Service to as many areas as possible. Everyone in KC pays sales taxes dedicated to transit service, so one can argue that every neighborhood in KC deserves some service. This argument can be made regardless of the level of need, and regardless of whether many people might ride.

  - By this logic, KCATA should try to reach all existing developed areas, and make active efforts to reach as many new developments as possible in outer parts of the city.

Based on the results of public and stakeholder outreach in June and July of 2019, this Draft Plan is built on the assumption that most coverage service should be oriented to serving areas of higher need.

At the same time, as explained previously, the plan would reduce total resources for coverage service from 50% to 40% of transit service in KC (see Key Choice no. 1). So in practice, this means the Draft Plan specifically focuses on avoiding coverage cuts in areas where incomes and car ownership rates are low.

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1 Many types of transit are called “flexible”. The RideKC network features five “Flex” routes covering areas in Kansas City, North Kansas City, Gladstone and Raytown. For the most part, Flex routes run only on weekdays. To use Flex, customers must call KCATA a day in advance and make reservations. KCATA is exploring ways to move Flex services to same-day on-demand dispatch.
A Frequent Grid, Seven Days a Week, to Connect More People to Opportunities

Increasing ridership requires providing fast and frequent service in the areas where transit can reach many people in walking distance.

In KCMO, this means providing more frequent bus routes in the area south of the Missouri River, north of 75th Street and west of the Blue River.

KCATA has already made substantial investments in north-south service with MAX routes operating every 10 to 12 minutes on Main St, Troost Ave and Prospect Ave. But it’s still hard to reach opportunities in places like Midtown, Westport, the Plaza and beyond from many places on the East Side.

As a result, the Draft Plan proposes the following improvements:

- **East-West Service** would be upgraded to come every 15 minutes or better on 12th Street, 39th Street and 47th Street. This is in addition to existing East-West frequent service on Independence Ave and 31st Street.

- Increased weekend service on all frequent routes. **All routes that run every 15 minutes or better on weekdays would also run every 15 minutes or better on Saturdays, and every 20 minutes or better on Sundays.**

These types of improvements are crucial to making transit a more useful part of daily life. Any plan to make transit more useful in Kansas City should build on them, adding even more frequent East-West routes, and improving evening and weekend service more.

However, the extent of frequent service improvements in this Draft Plan has been limited by the resources available to KCATA, and the public’s limited appetite for change within the existing resources, based on findings detailed in Chapter 2. Making the improvements above will require service reductions and adjustments elsewhere, as described below.

Figure 3: Map of the proposed Draft Network in core areas of Kansas City, MO. In this map, routes are color-coded by frequency, where the most frequent routes are in red (every 15 minutes or better), followed by dark blue (every 30 minutes) and light blue (every 40 to 60 minutes). Areas served by Flex routes are shown in light brown.
A Simpler Network with Less Duplication
The Draft Plan would pay for many frequency improvements by consolidating coverage-oriented service into fewer routes, and by reducing the number of duplicative routes, that provide limited added value in either ridership or coverage terms.

Examples of duplicative routes removed in the proposed network include:

• Route 9 (9th Street), which runs within 1/4-mile of both Route 12 (12th Street) and Route 24 (Independence). Route 9 consistently gets lower ridership than Route 12, despite providing a similar level of weekday service in similar neighborhoods. This is likely because more frequent service on Route 24 is available nearby. In the Draft Plan, resources currently spent on 9th Street would be used to double the frequency of buses on 12th Street.

• Route 10 (Woodland-Brooklyn) runs mostly within 1/4-mile of the Prospect MAX, and connects the same East Side neighborhoods north of 39th Street to Downtown KCMO. Route 10 attracts fewer than 100 boardings per weekday, compared to over 4,000 boardings per weekday on Prospect Ave. In the Draft Plan, resources currently spent on Route 10 would be used to improve weekend service on Prospect MAX.

• Route 25 (Troost Local), which overlaps the Troost MAX for much of its length. Nearly 2/3 of Route 25 boardings are at shared stops with TMAX. In the Draft Plan, resources currently spent on the Troost Local would be used to improve weekend service on TMAX.

More Effective Investment of Coverage Resources
Most areas north of the Missouri River, south of 75th street and east of the Blue River have developed more recently, at lower densities and less continuously than the urban core. In these areas, destinations are farther apart, and far fewer people live in walking distance to any given street. As a result, transit service is much less likely to be useful to many people.

Bus routes in such areas are provided for coverage purposes and should not be expected to generate high ridership. As explained on page 7, this Draft Plan would reduce resources for coverage-oriented service. But it would do so in ways that minimize the impacts on areas where incomes and car ownership are low, and minimizes the overall number of places that would no longer be near any service. This includes the following strategies:

• Expand the area served by Flex routes. This makes it possible to continue providing a very limited service, in areas where expected ridership is so low that a fixed route is an inefficient use of resources. In this vein, the area covered by Flex Route 299 (Gladstone - KC North) would greatly expand, and Route 299’s service hours would be extended.

• Adjust frequencies to match observed ridership. This includes changes like increasing midday frequency on Blue Ridge Boulevard to every 30 minutes, or decreasing frequency on outer Wornall Road to every 60 minutes.

• Combine the most productive parts of low ridership routes. Some existing routes have very low ridership overall, but the majority of riders are in just a few locations that can be combined into a more efficient service. For example, the most productive segments of Routes 231 (Riverside-Antioch) and 234 (Boardwalk-Antioch) in northwest KC have been combined into a new Route 239 to Antioch Crossing and Downtown.

• Eliminate routes that provide almost no useful service. Most existing routes that generate fewer than 100 boardings per day or less than 10 boardings per hour of service were not included in the Draft Network. Wherever possible, the parts of those routes that generate the most boardings have been integrated into other routes, per the strategies described above.

What’s a Flex Route?
KCATA manages several different services under the RideKC brand name. The two most relevant to this plan are:

• Fixed Routes. These are traditional bus routes, that follow a predetermined route and operate based on a schedule. Fixed routes are a cost-effective way of transporting many people at the same time. Anyone can ride, anytime the bus is running. There are around 40 fixed routes in KCMO today, serving about 40,000 boardings per weekday.

• Flex Routes. A Flex “route” is actually an area. In this area, a bus picks passengers up where they are and drops them off at their destination, like a shared taxi. Flex routes are challenging to dispatch and can’t carry as many people as fixed routes. They are most useful in areas where demand is too low for fixed routes. There are 4 Flex routes serving parts of KCMO today, serving about 150 boardings per weekday. Today, getting a ride on Flex requires calling ahead the day before. KCATA intends to switch to on-demand service as soon as resources become available (see page 14).
Figure 4: Map of the proposed Draft Network in core and outlying areas of Kansas City, MO. In this map, routes are color-coded by frequency, where the most frequent routes are in red (every 15 minutes or better), followed by dark blue (every 30 minutes) and light blue (every 40 to 60 minutes). Areas served by Flex routes are shown in light brown.
Frequent Service in More Places, in More Directions and on More Days

How to Read the Maps on This Page

The maps on this page illustrate how the frequent network would expand and begin to represent a grid of connecting North-South and East-West services.

Because the focus of these maps is frequent, high-ridership service, these maps show only the areas where underlying demand (i.e. residential density, job density, and built environment) best supports high-ridership transit service. The little square represent key points in the network.

Areas within KCMO city boundaries are highlighted in white, though KCMO extends further to the north, south and east of the extent shown.

Existing and proposed transit frequency on each street is denoted by line color, where red lines mean frequent service, every 15 minutes or better. Other colors indicate lower frequencies, as shown in the legend below.

For a detailed route map of the proposed network, please refer to page 27.
How would people be affected by this change?

More Access to Opportunity, Especially on Weekends

Most people choose to ride transit (or not) based on three main factors:

- **Pricing.** What does transit cost, compared to the alternatives?
- **Access.** Can the bus get you where you are going in a reasonable amount of time?
- **Tastes and Preferences.** Do you feel safe on the bus? Do you like driving? What are you doing later? How much stuff are you carrying home?

Changing the transit network won’t change gas prices or most people’s tastes and preferences. But it can allow people to reach more places (and more opportunities) in less time.

The average wait for a bus that comes every 30 minutes is 15 minutes; but the average wait for a bus that comes every 15 minutes is 7.5 minutes. So **higher frequency means less waiting, and people save time.** The draft network would save people time in three distinct ways:

- **More East-West service every 15 minutes, rather than every 20 to 30 minutes on weekdays.**
- **More weekend service on frequent routes means most transit riders would experience almost the same service on weekends and weekdays.**
- **On some suburban routes, frequency would improve from every 60 minutes to every 30 minutes, e.g. on Blue Ridge Boulevard, and between Antioch Crossing and Downtown KCMO.**

As a result, access to opportunity would increase noticeably:

- **The average KCMO resident using transit could access +7% more jobs on weekdays, and +22% more jobs on Saturdays, in 60 minutes or less, door-to-door** (including walking, waiting, riding, and transferring if required).
- **The average low-income KCMO resident using transit could access +7.5% more jobs on weekdays, and +24% more jobs on Saturdays, in the same amount of time.**

Figure 6: Job Access Change Maps, on weekdays and Sundays. KCMO (the is divided into green, gray and pink hexagons. The size of each hexagon shows how many people live in that area. In green areas, the Draft Network would make it possible to access more jobs in 60 minutes. In pink areas, travel by transit would require longer waits, or in limited cases would no longer be possible. Grey indicates no substantial change.
Many more people near more frequent and more useful service

The draft network would ensure that more people and jobs would be located near frequent service.

The number of KCMO residents near frequent transit service, coming every 15 minutes or better, would increase by +19%, from 116,000 to 138,000.

This increase would not be limited to any one demographic group. The number of low income residents near frequent service would increase by +15%, and the number of minority residents near frequent service would increase by +13%.

And the number of KCMO jobs near frequent service would increase by +8%, from 131,000 to 141,000.

Slightly fewer people near transit overall

At the same time, some areas would receive less service. Some people would need to walk further to access transit than they do today, and some areas that currently receive service would see fewer buses or none at all.

The number of KCMO residents near any RideKC service (fixed or Flex) would decline by -1.5%, from 383,000 to 377,000. And the number of jobs near any RideKC service would decline by -1%, going from 255,000 to 253,000.

This is a consequence of the choice to orient service slightly more toward ridership, and slightly away from coverage. In the context of a fixed budget, re-orienting service toward higher ridership, even slightly, means focusing more on frequent routes in core areas, and steering away from some lower-density, outlying and isolated neighborhoods.

In keeping with the choice to orient coverage service to higher need areas, the coverage reductions in this Draft Plan impact low income residents far less than the average KCMO resident. The number of low income residents near any RideKC service would remain substantially the same, declining by only -0.4%.

Figure 7: Proximity Analysis Charts. These charts show the number of KCMO residents and jobs located within 1/2 mile of any bus stop on weekdays in existing service (lighter color) and if the Draft Plan were implemented (darker color). The top chart (orange) is limited to residents and charts near frequent service, every 15 minutes or better on weekdays. The bottom chart (blue) shows residents and jobs near any service, regardless of frequency, and also includes areas served by Flex routes.
Priorities for Future Improvements

Given projected trends in sales tax revenue, KCATA cannot responsibly assume that new resources will become available for additional service in KC MO in the next two years.

Due to these fiscal constraints, the Draft Plan for RideKC Next leaves many known areas for improvement on the table for the future. Should sales taxes or other revenue sources increase, the following improvements are “next in line”.

Coverage: On-Demand Service on Flex Routes
In existing service, the RideKC network includes fixed routes (i.e. regular bus routes) and five “Flex” routes. The “Flex” routes cover low-density suburban areas in Kansas City, North Kansas City, Gladstone and Raytown. These are shown in brown on the network maps on page 6 (existing) and page 10 (draft proposed).

For the most part, Flex routes run only on weekdays, often just for a few hours in the middle of the day. And to use Flex, customers must call KCATA a day in advance and make reservations.

KCATA would like to transition the Flex routes to provide an on-demand service. With an on-demand service, customers wouldn’t need to make reservations. Anytime during Flex service hours, anyone located in the Flex zone could summon a bus by using a smartphone app, or making a phone call to KCATA.

To make such a service work, KCATA would need the resources to increase Flex route capacity. Allowing people to hail a vehicle at any time requires more vehicles, otherwise variable wait times can make using the service to access jobs or any other time-sensitive destinations difficult. KCATA may also need to extend Flex service hours, as several routes currently operate only 8 or fewer hours per day.

Ridership: Better Service to Downtown
The Draft Plan’s slight shift of resources toward high ridership is mostly used to increase East-West service and provide higher frequencies on weekends.

But the Draft Plan does not change the fact that transit service levels in Kansas City are relatively low compared to demand. Many streets with service every 30 minutes could support a bus every 15 minutes, and others with service every 60 minutes could support a bus every 30 minutes.

This is true even for buses that go to and from Downtown KC MO, in theory transit’s strongest market. Through the RideKC Next process, KCATA has identified the following North-South routes to Downtown as the strongest candidates for a frequency increase when resources become available:

• Route 18 - Indiana/Cleveland. This route, located about 3/4 mile to the east of the new Prospect MAX, is the strongest candidate for a frequency increase on the south side. This is due to the combination of relatively high population density and the high number of local residents with low incomes and households with no vehicles.

• The Draft Plan extends Route 18 out to 75th Street, but otherwise retains the existing 30-minute frequency. KCATA would like to increase frequency on Route 18 to every 15 minutes.

• Route 201 - North Oak. This route is the strongest candidate for a frequency increase on the north of the Missouri River. In existing service, Route 201 runs every 30 minutes in the morning and evening peak, but only every 60 minutes at other times. KCATA would like to increase frequency on Route 201 to over 30 minutes at all times, to reflect relatively strong demand.

• However, nearly half of Route 201 is located outside KC MO. The 201 goes through the cities of North Kansas City and Gladstone, and the villages of Oak, Oakview, Oakwood, and Oakwood Park, none of whom contribute resources to this route. Until more jurisdictions come to the table, upgrading Route 201 is not an efficient use of KC MO tax dollars.

Ridership: More Frequent East-West Routes
With existing resources, the Draft Plan increases East-West frequency to every 15 minutes, 6 days a week (and every 20 minutes on Sunday) on 12th Street, 39th Street and 47th Street.

However, it’s clear that the need for frequent East-West service doesn’t end here. The bigger the area the frequent grid covers, and the fewer gaps within it, the more useful the transit system will become. KCATA has identified the following streets as the strongest candidates for an East-West frequency increase.

• 63rd Street from Wornall Road to the Zoo as the strongest candidates for an East-West frequency increase. This stretch of 63rd Street features many employers and several major destinations, particularly the Research Hospital at Blenheim Square. The existing Route 63 is the single most productive 30-minute route in the RideKC system. This is a strong indication that service on 63rd Street should be upgraded to every 15 minutes when resources become available.

• 18th Street from the Crossroads to Indiana Ave. If Route 18 - Indiana/Cleveland were upgraded to provide service every 15 minutes, it may make sense to extend west-east service on 18th Street all the way to Broadway before turning into Downtown, rather than the current path to Downtown via Troost Ave. This would make it possible to provide frequent service to and from more jobs in the emerging Crossroads area.

• 75th Street from Prospect Ave to State Line Rd. This is another street where service could be improved in conjunction with upgrading Route 18 to every 15 minutes. It would be possible to extend Route 18 to cover 75th Street, and a higher frequency would on 75th Street, combined to north-south service on Indiana/Cleveland would make this a more useful east-west element in the network.
What happens next?

A Public Conversation
This Draft Plan is intended to start a public conversation about the future of the RideKC network in Kansas City, MO. KCATA will take a number of outreach actions in February and March 2020 to assess the community’s reaction to this proposal, and determine next steps.

The goal is to hear from as many people as possible. Let us know what you think by taking the survey at RideKCNext.org by March 16, 2020!

Key Issue no. 1: Ridership vs. Coverage
This Draft Plan includes a slight shift of resources toward higher ridership, and away from extensive coverage. As a result, more east-west frequent routes will operate in the core of the city, and weekend service will improve. But some areas will experience a reduction in transit service, and a small number of people may lose service altogether.

Did we get the ridership vs. coverage balance right? Now that you have seen the likely outcomes, should the Final Plan be more aggressive, or should it look more like the status quo? Or should it even swing in the opposite direction?

Remember, increasing ridership requires make service more useful to many people, but that’s only possible in core parts of the city. We could instead extend coverage to more outlying areas, but that would require service cuts in the parts of Kansas City where transit is useful to the most people.

Key Issue no. 2: Purpose of Coverage
This Draft Plan assumes that coverage resources should continue to be primarily targeted at areas where many people have relatively high needs and few alternatives.

For service focused on coverage rather than ridership, is focusing mostly on areas with higher need still the right strategy? If we extended coverage service to more areas, we would have to spread the service thinner. That means fewer places with service every 30 minutes, and more places with service every 60 minutes or Flex service.

Key Issue no. 3: Priorities for Improvement
Because KCATA can’t assume any new resources, the Draft Plan can’t be everything to all people. But KCATA needs to know what it should do if the city or voters decided to provide more money for transit.

Which of the following future improvements matters most to you:

- Replace Flex routes with on-demand service, so more people in outlying areas can use transit without reserving a ride a day in advance?
- Even more frequent East-West routes, so more people can use transit to travel in any direction they need to in core areas of the city?
- Improve service to Downtown KCMO from more areas, so more people have convenient access to the region’s single largest center of employment?

Getting to a Final Plan
In late March, KCATA will summarize the results of the public’s answers to these questions, and request direction from its Board of Directors on the steps to take to achieve a Final Plan.

Depending on public reaction and policy direction, KCATA may adjust the Final Plan. Because this plan is explicitly focused on the portions of the RideKC network that operate in KCMO, this may include seeking policy direction or final approval (or both) from the KCMO Mayor and City Council.

Assuming that there are no major roadblocks to this process, KCATA intends to implement the Final Plan in the fall of 2020.

Key Issue no. 4: Purpose of Coverage
This Draft Plan assumes that coverage resources should continue to be primarily targeted at areas where many people have relatively high needs and few alternatives.

For service focused on coverage rather than ridership, is focusing mostly on areas with higher need still the right strategy? If we extended coverage service to more areas, we would have to spread the service thinner. That means fewer places with service every 30 minutes, and more places with service every 60 minutes or Flex service.

Full Report
For more information on the Draft Plan, please consult the full report. In it you’ll find:

- Chapter 1: How did we get here? explains the process and public conversations that have led to this plan, including how different trade-offs and priorities were considered.
- Chapter 2: What’s in the Draft Network? describes the proposed bus routes and service levels in more detail, and the ways in which these would be similar or different from existing service. It also outlines some key considerations for network implementation.
- Chapter 3: How would this plan make transit more useful? compares the Draft Network with existing service, using the proximity and job access metrics presented in this summary. It includes further discussion on the likely positive and negative consequences of implementing the Draft Network as proposed.
- Chapter 4: Where do we go from here? expands on the key issues and trade-offs at play, and the consequences that different decisions might have in shaping the Final Plan.