



2: Existing Conditions

MARC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Kansas City region and spans nine counties across two states. The boundaries are shown in Figure 2. The five counties in Kansas are Platte, Leavenworth, Wyandotte, Johnson, and Miami, and the four in Missouri are Clay, Ray, Jackson, and Cass. There is one large Urbanized Area (UZA), which encompasses Kansas City, Missouri. There are several smaller UZAs as well (populations less than 200,000), however only the Kansas City UZA is administered by the Kansas City Area Regional Transportation Authority (KCATA).

FUNDING

FTA Section 5310

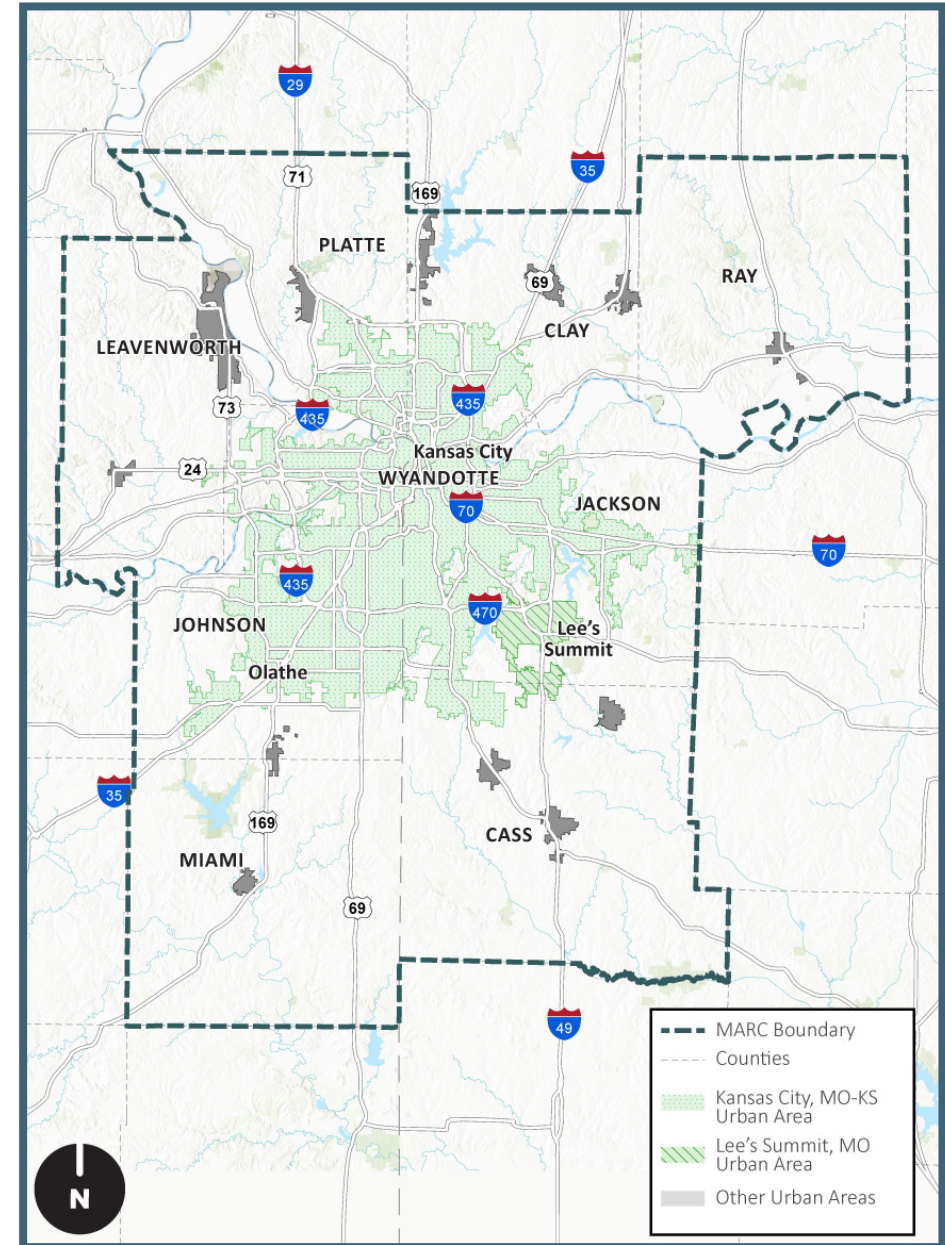
Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities - Section 5310 (49 U.S.C 5310), commonly referred to as Section 5310, is a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program that provides financial assistance to meet the transportation needs for older adults and people with disabilities. Section 5310 funding is the most common source of funding for most enhanced and specialized transportation providers. Funding awarded by the program can be used primarily for capital expenses, acquisition of contracted services, mobility management programs, training programs, construction of ADA compliant amenities at transit stops, and other similar projects. The FTA website has a Section 5310 webpage² with more information including a frequently asked questions (FAQ) page and examples of eligible projects. Eligible subrecipient organizations include operators of public transportation, private non-profits, and state or local government agencies. FTA's Circular 9070.1(H)³ outlines the requirements and guidance for the program.

KCATA is the designated recipient of Section 5310 funds for the Kansas City UZA. Programming for Section 5310 funds occurs every other year or as determined by the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between MARC and KCATA, and by the designated recipient's Program Management Plan (PMP). Organizations in the region's small UZA's or other outlying areas can apply for Section 5310 funds directly through their respective state DOTs.

Section 5310 funding is competitive, and generally there are more applicants than there are funds available. Organizations and programs that provide mobility services to eligible populations should not and cannot rely only on Section 5310 alone for funding for their projects. Section 5310 funds cover up to 80% of capital costs and 50% for operating assistance. The remaining percentage of costs must be covered by a local matching contribution; this can come from a state, city or county government (including Departments of Health, etc.), or private sources like donations (including in-kind contributions) or the applicant organization's own budget.

Figure 2 – Kansas City Region Urban Areas

Source: MARC, US Census Bureau



2. [Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities- Section 5310](#)

3. [FTA Circular 9070.1H, November 2024](#)

User-Side Funding

Non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) is an eligible expense for low-income beneficiaries of Medicaid, and state Medicaid programs must assure that Medicaid beneficiaries have transportation access to all medically necessary services. Separate from emergency ambulance service, NEMT entails transportation to and from visits with your Primary Care Physician or specialist (including pregnancy check-ups), behavioral health follow-ups after hospital stay, dental appointments, counseling, eye exams, etc. As NEMT is not for emergencies it can include mileage reimbursement, public transportation, vanpool, taxi, ride shares, or air transportation in limited circumstances. Medicare can also be used for medical transportation, but only in the case of emergency, or if the user otherwise requires ambulance transportation. The Department of Veterans Affairs also provides NEMT services for low-income, disabled, or pensioned veterans.

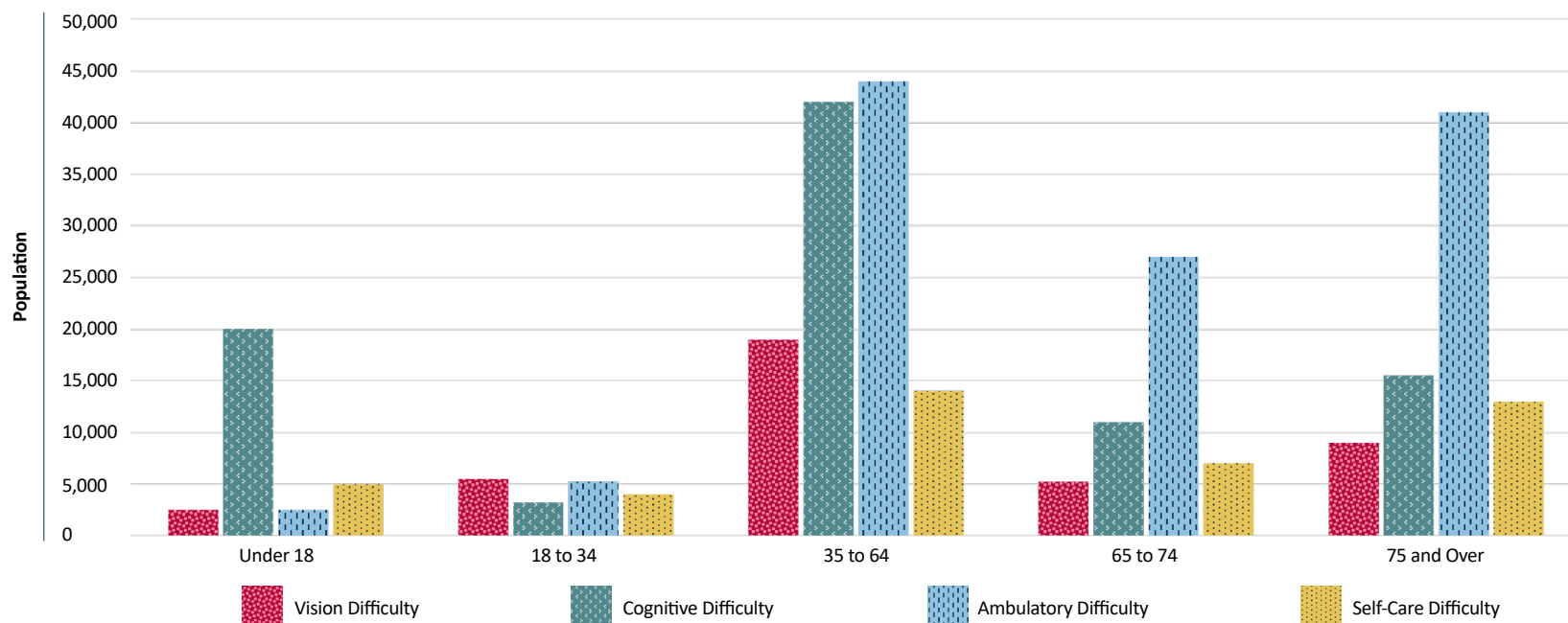
Provider-Side Funding

Transportation currently remains an eligible expense under Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and value-based care initiatives. Kansas HCBS waivers list transportation as a supportive service to help individuals access medical care, community activities, and daily living needs. Similarly in Missouri, HCBS waivers administered in Missouri list transportation as a supportive service for individuals with disabilities. In Missouri, Senate Bill 40 is a state tax levy that provides funding for residential, vocational and other programs and services through boards throughout the state. Once formed, a board may create sheltered workshops, residential facilities, or related services for the care or employment of individuals with disabilities. These funds may be used in part to fund transportation services for these populations.

Title III-B of the Older Americans Act (OAA) provides funding for transportation services as well. These funds, distributed to state agencies, have many uses, including case management and home assistance services in addition to transportation. These funds are used by Area Agencies on Aging to fund essential service transportation (e.g. NEMTs, grocery trips), and site transportation (e.g. congregate meals). There are also general revenue funds available from states. In Missouri, the Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program (MEHTAP) reimburses eligible not-for-profit organizations for operating expenses for approved transportation projects.

Figure 3 - Instances of Disabilities in the Kansas City Region by Age

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data



DEMOGRAPHICS

According to the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, roughly 12% of the area's 2.1 million people over the age of five in MARC's nine county service area reported having at least one disability. Of those, 39% were over the age of 65.

As listed in Figure 3 (see page 12), the most prevalent disabilities in the Kansas City region with those above 35 are ambulatory disabilities. Cognitive disabilities are the most prevalent for younger age groups. In either case, transportation is likely to be a challenge. The significantly higher incidences of ambulatory disabilities among the 35 to 64 year age group when compared to older cohorts will potentially stress the existing service infrastructure as that group ages into the 65 years and older age group.

Older Adults

Approximately 15% of the region is currently 65 or older. The share of the regional population aged 65 and older is expected to grow substantially over the next 15 years, as about 19% of the region's population, currently aged 50-64 years old, is expected to age into that group during that time. The largest growth is expected in Ray County, Missouri and Miami County, Kansas (22%). Figure 4 shows the populations aged 50-64 and the 65 and older populations by county, and Figure 5 shows the over 65-year-old population per square mile.

Figure 4 – Aging Population and Potential Growth by County

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data

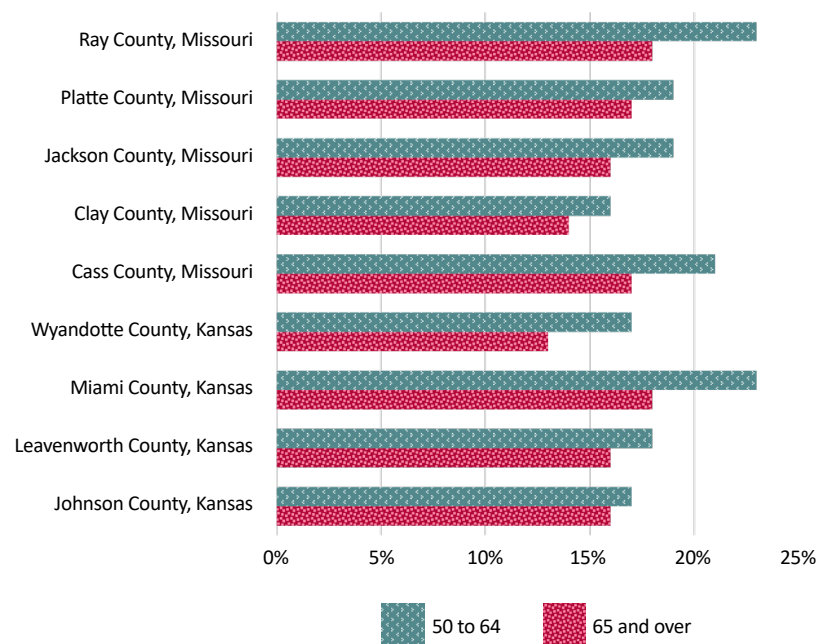
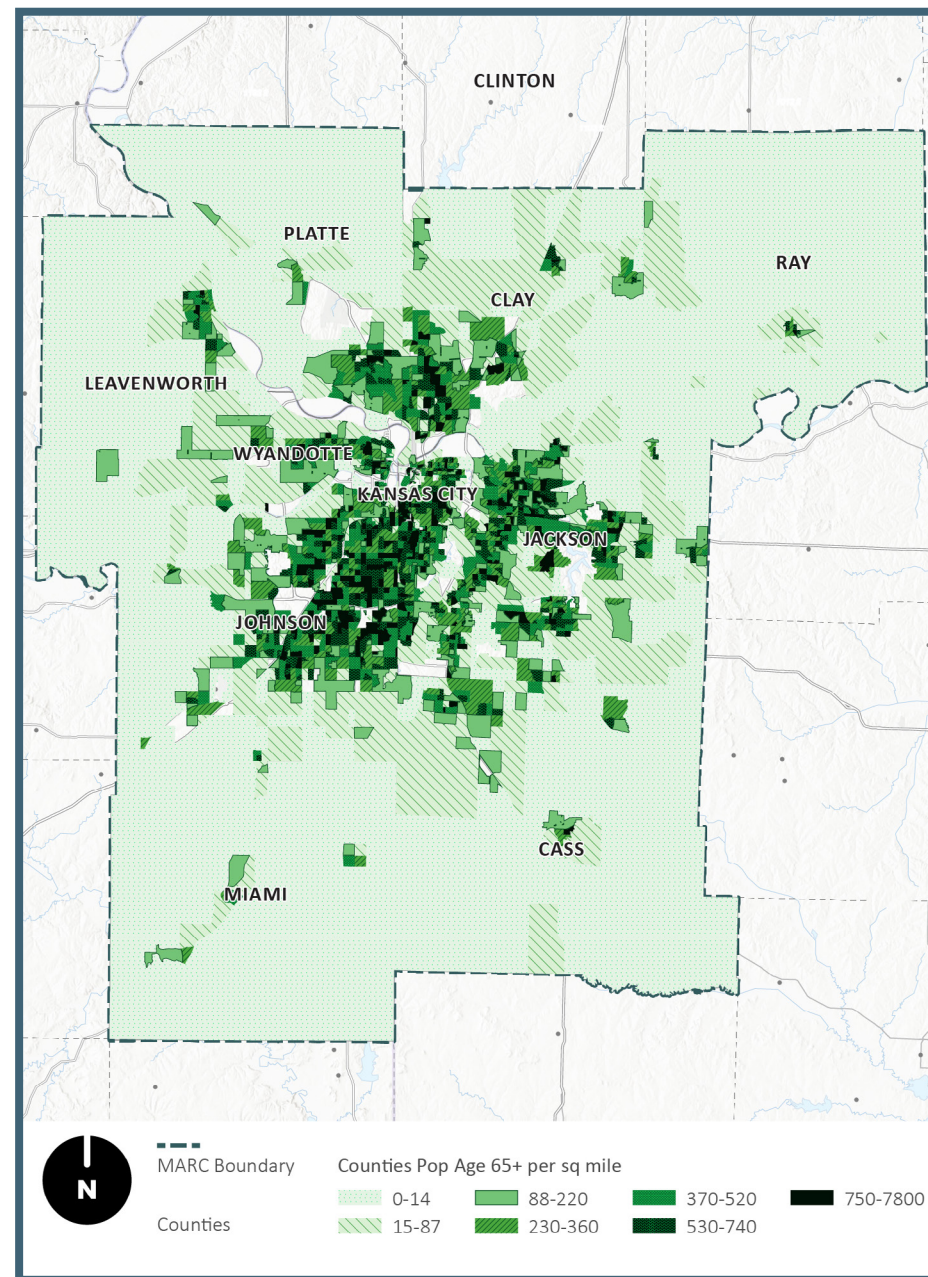


Figure 5 — Kansas City Region Elderly Population (65 or Older) per Square Mile

Source: MARC, Replica, Spring 2025 Dataset, Block Group Level



Veterans

In the Kansas City region, about 7% of the 18 and older population are veterans. 28% of that population has a disability, and 6% are below the poverty line. Of those veterans that are below the poverty line, 47% also have a disability.

Figure 6 – Veteran Population by Age

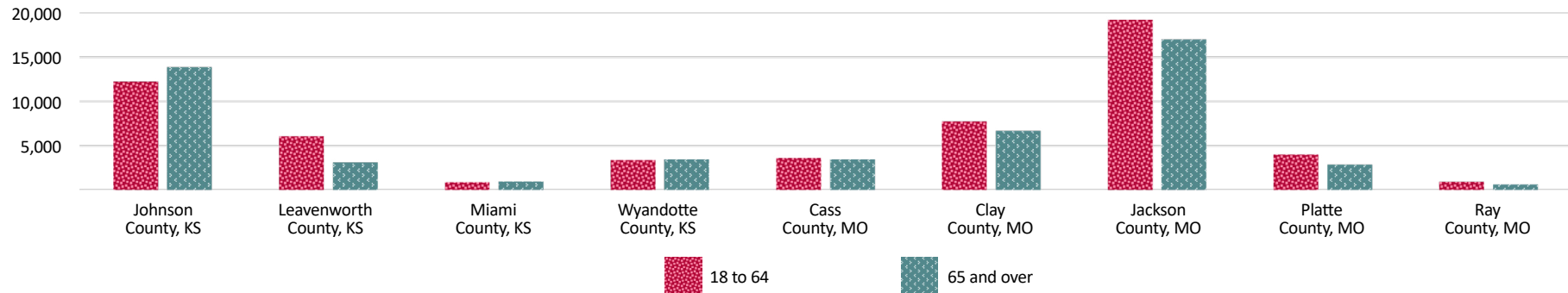


Figure 7 – Veterans as Proportion of Age Group

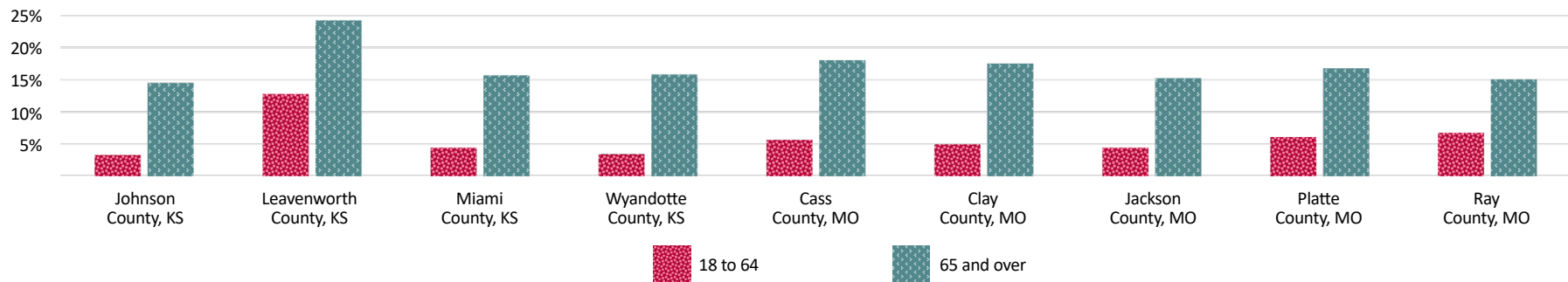
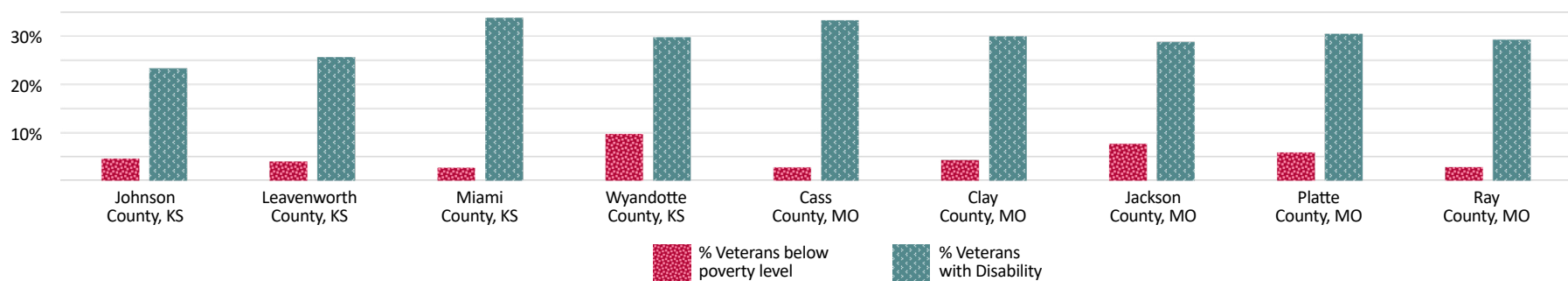


Figure 8 – Veteran Disability Characteristics



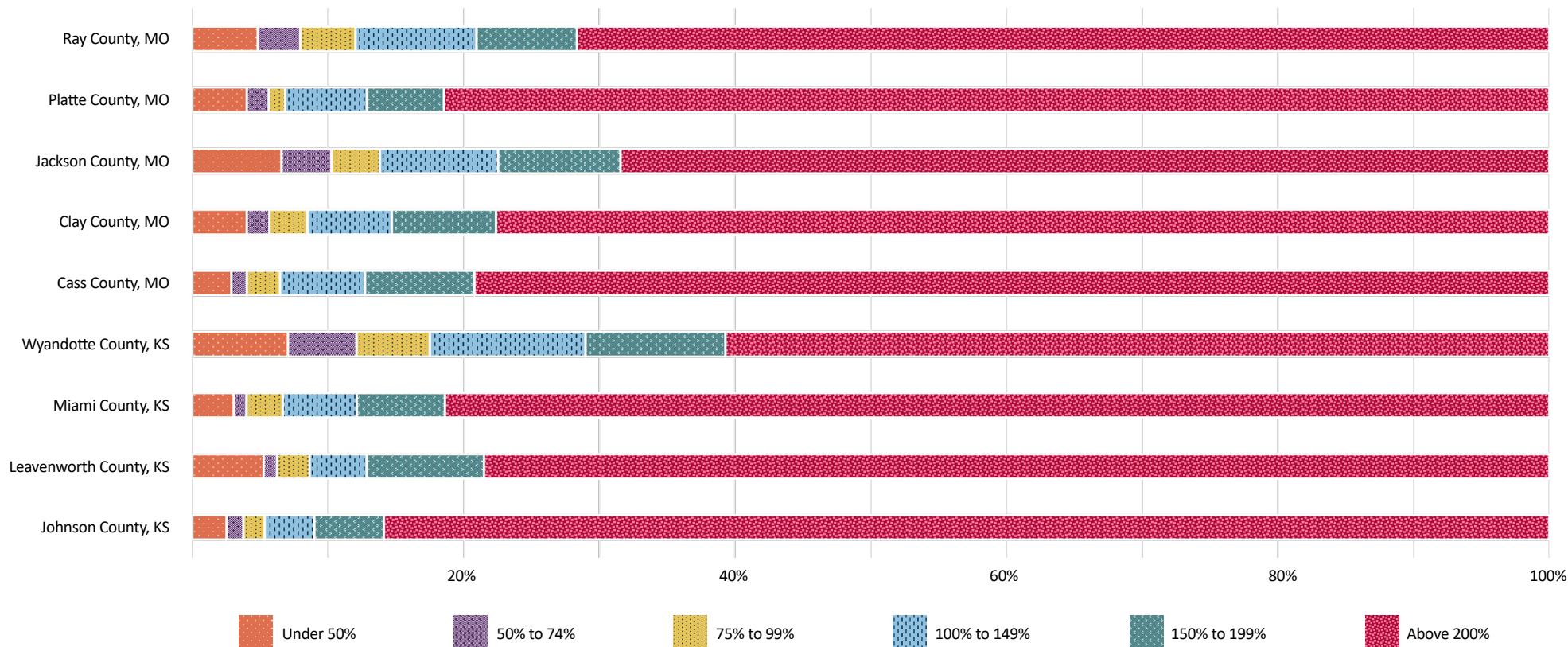
Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data

Low-Income Households

Transportation is also a challenge for households with low-income and those without access to personal vehicles. 10% of the region's households reported income below the federal poverty line, and 18% reported income below twice the federal poverty level. Wyandotte County has the highest concentration of poverty in the region, with 17% of households below the federal poverty level, and 32% below twice the federal level. Both Jackson County, Missouri and Wyandotte County, Kansas have poverty rates that exceed the national average.

Figure 9 – Ratio of Income to Poverty Level

Source: US Census Bureau, 2023 Data



Vehicle ownership also affects a household’s transportation options. Households without access to a vehicle must rely on alternative modes of transportation, which can limit employment options and complicate daily life, especially for households with older adults or individuals with disabilities. 5.4% of the region’s households are without a vehicle available, with around 3% higher concentration in both Jackson and Wyandotte counties. These counties also report higher-than-average poverty rates. In contrast, all other counties exceed the regional average of 58% for households owning two or more vehicles.

Figure 10 – Colleges Served by Transit

Source: MARC

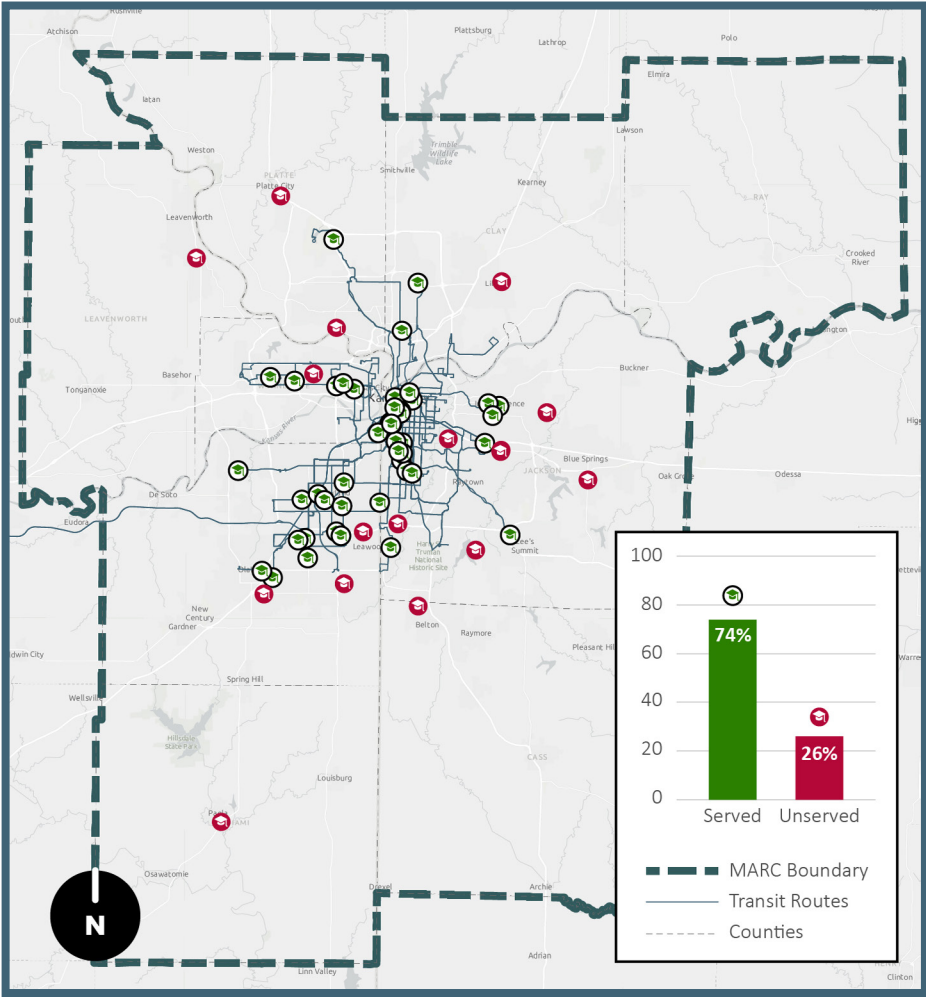


Figure 11 – Health Care Centers Served by Transit

Source: MARC

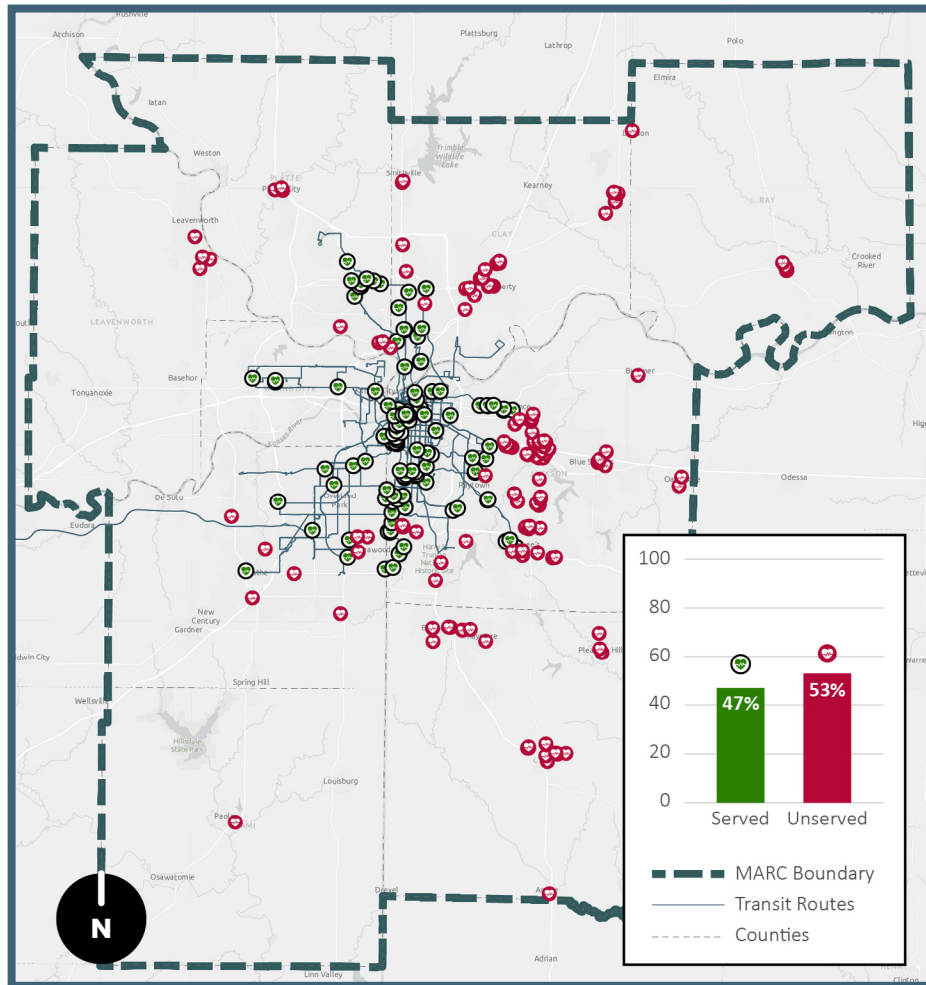
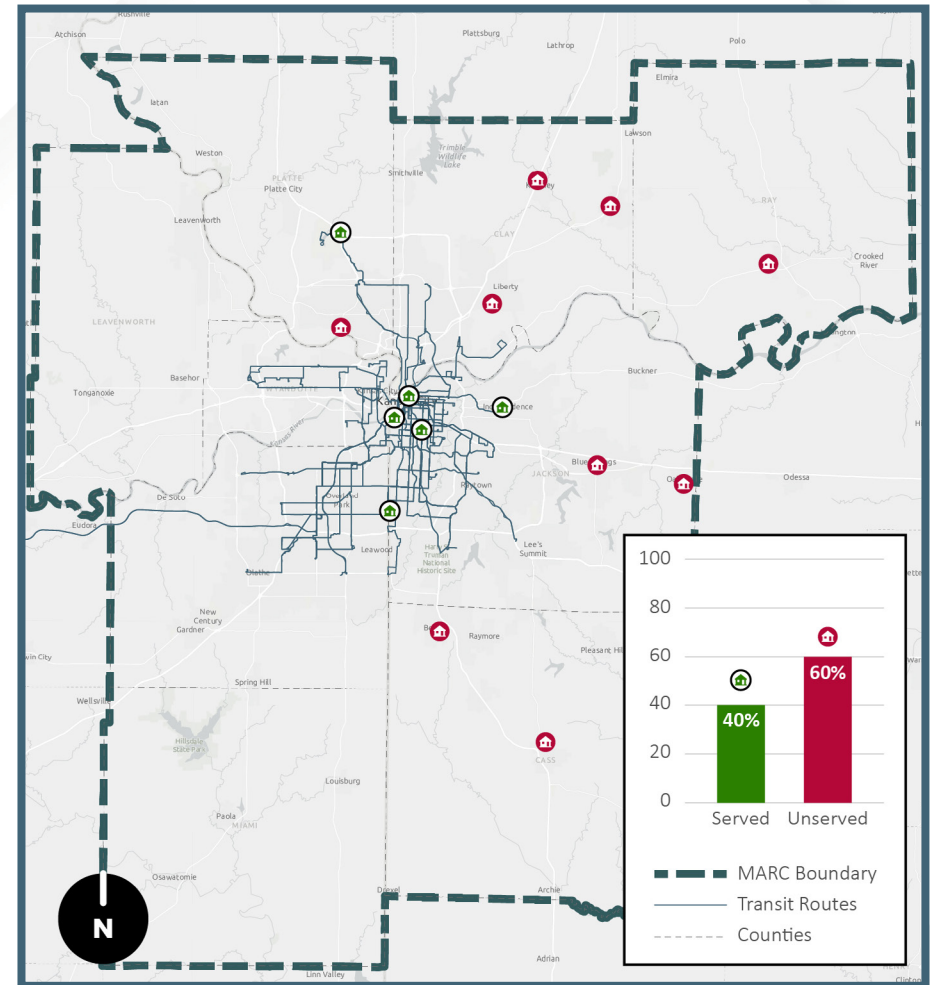


Figure 12 – Senior Centers Served by Transit

Source: MARC



KEY DESTINATIONS

After understanding where target populations live, knowing where they need to go is equally important. MARC's previous coordinated plan identified that regional hospitals, clinics, dialysis centers, (collectively referred to as health care centers), senior centers, and colleges as essential locations for transit and paratransit service.

In the region, 74% of colleges, 47% of hospitals and health care facilities, and 40% of senior centers are accessible by fixed-route transit. Accessibility is defined as being within three quarters of a mile of a transit stop, in alignment with the complimentary paratransit boundary.

Other important locations include the Country Club Plaza, Kansas City International Airport and the Truman Sports Complex. While technically accessible by fixed-route transit, service availability may be limited by time-of-day and day-of-week constraints.

FIXED-ROUTE TRANSIT

Transit service in the Kansas City region is provided by four primary agencies: the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Johnson County Transit, Unified Government Transportation and the Kansas City Streetcar Authority. These agencies coordinate under the RideKC brand to present a unified system to riders.

KCATA is the largest of the four, operating most of the region's routes and serving the urban core and Kansas City, Missouri. Across the region, there are 48 bus routes and one streetcar line, including two high-frequency routes that run every 15 to 20 minutes throughout the day and six commuter or express routes that operate during peak hours.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all routes—except commuter and express services—are paired with complementary paratransit service for eligible residents within three-quarters of a mile of a transit route. A full list of regional transit routes is available in Appendix A.

Most census tracts within the urban core that have high concentrations of transportation-disadvantaged populations are served by fixed-route transit. However, outside the I-435/I-470/MO-291 loop, transit access becomes limited or nonexistent, except for central and parts of southwestern Johnson County. The region's sprawling development patterns make it difficult to provide efficient fixed-route service in these outlying areas.

Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

KCATA operates the majority of transit services in the region, including two Bus Rapid Transit Lite routes—Troost MAX, Prospect MAX—30 local bus routes and one express route. The agency also provides paratransit service, general public demand response service, and IRIS microtransit. KCATA's service map is shown in Figure 13. KCATA currently contracts with 10 jurisdictions in the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Figure 13 – KCATA Route Map

Source: KCATA 2025 GTFS Data

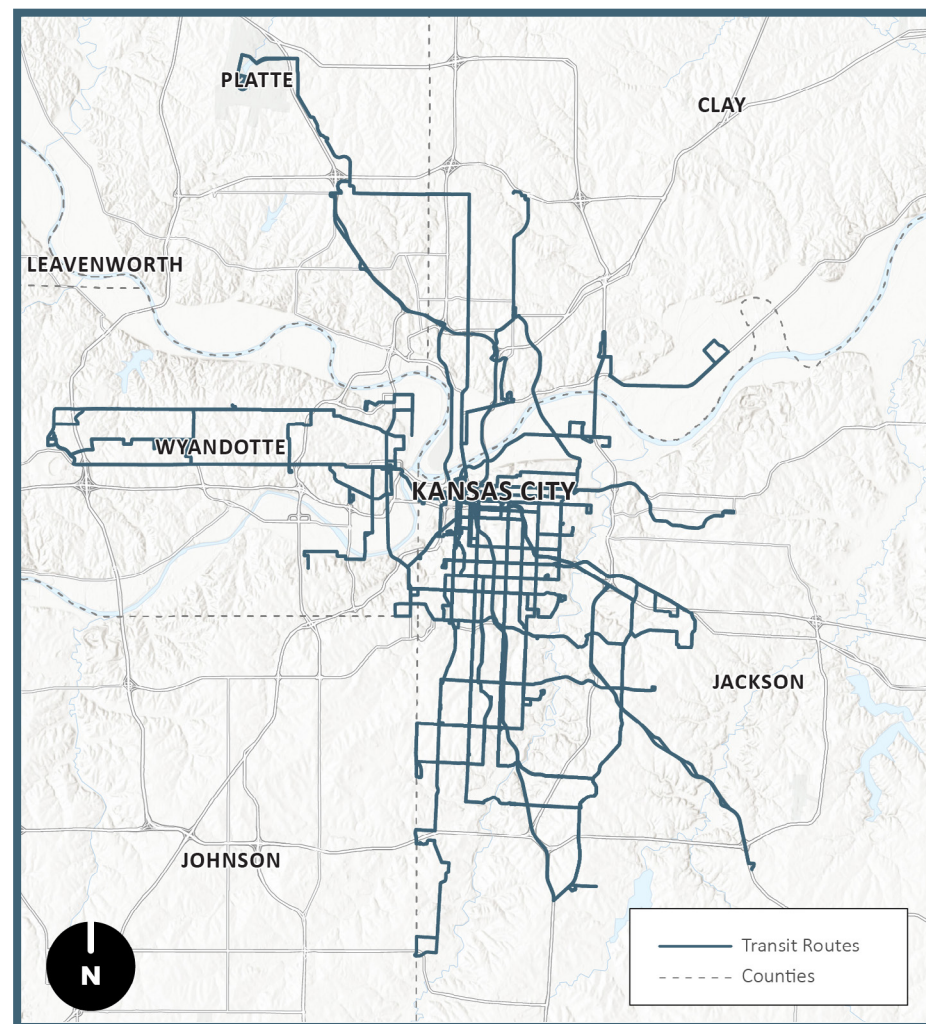


Figure 14 – Johnson County Transit Routes

Source: JCT 2025 GTFS Data

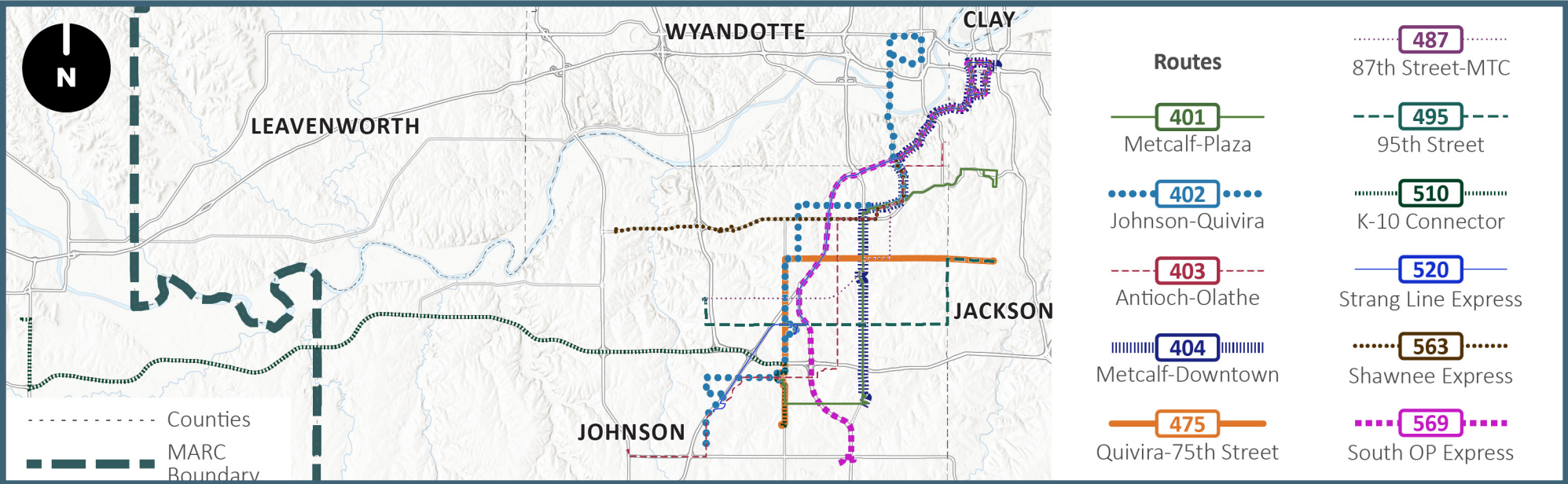
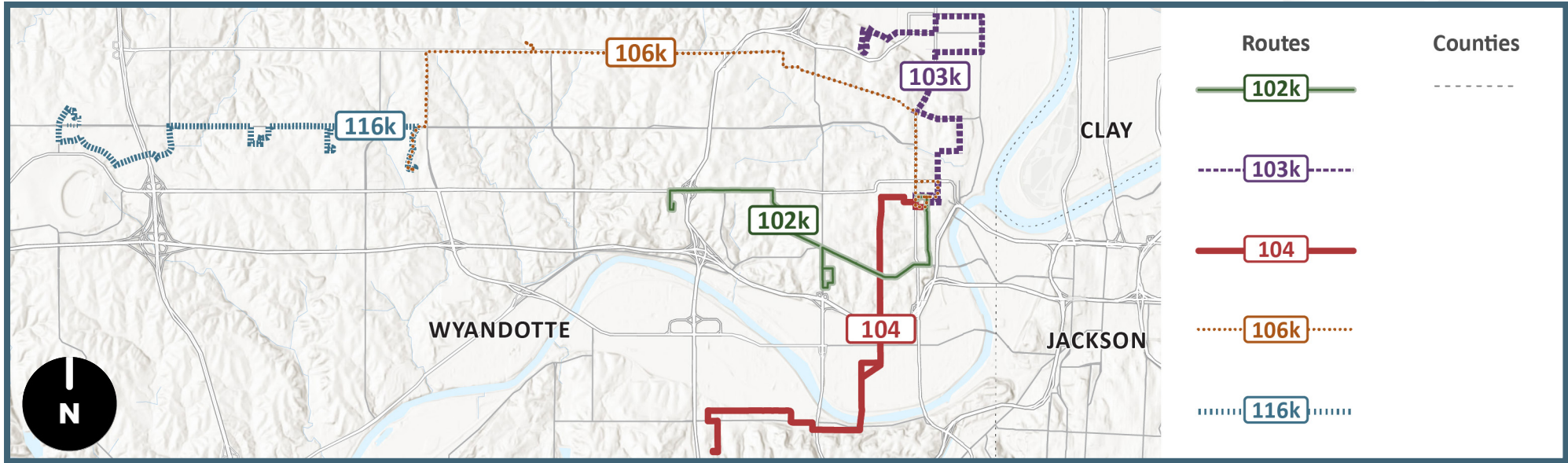


Figure 15 – Unified Government Transportation Transit Routes

Source: Unified Government 2025 GTFS Data



Johnson County Transit

Transit services in Johnson County, Kansas are provided by Johnson County Transit (JCT). JCT operates 11 commuter express routes in Johnson, Wyandotte, and Douglas counties in Kansas and in Jackson County, Missouri. JCT Routes are shown in below. They also offer RideKC Freedom and Swift paratransit services, as well as microtransit. Unlike the Unified Government of Wyandotte County (UG) and the City of Independence, Johnson County does not contract with KCATA for KCATA-operated routes to serve Johnson County.

Unified Government Transportation

Unified Government Transportation (UGT) provides additional transit services that operate within UG, as well as contracts with KCATA to operate routes that connect UG to the region. Services directly operated by UG include seven fixed bus routes, one micro transit service, and paratransit service. All routes serve one or both transit centers in UG, at 7th & Minnesota and 47th & State Avenue. UGT’s fixed routes are shown in below. All UG-operated routes operate on weekdays only.

Kansas City Streetcar Authority

The KC Streetcar route runs north-south along Main Street from River Market in the north to the Country Club Plaza and UMKC in the south. An extension from River Market to the Berkley Riverfront is scheduled to open in early 2026. The expanded streetcar route serves as a north-south spine in Kansas City, impacting how people use the greater transit network and transfer between modes.

Service Times

Paratransit services are required to provide complimentary service within three quarters of a mile radius of fixed-route transit routes. Similarly, paratransit only provides service during the hours of fixed-route transit operations. This means that if a transit route only operates during weekdays or service ends earlier than the rest of the transit system, paratransit services will also be unavailable. This underscores the importance of understanding the service times available to riders and the relationship between paratransit and fixed-route transit. RideKC generally defines their service times as listed below in Table 2. It should be noted these times vary slightly across each agency under the RideKC umbrella.

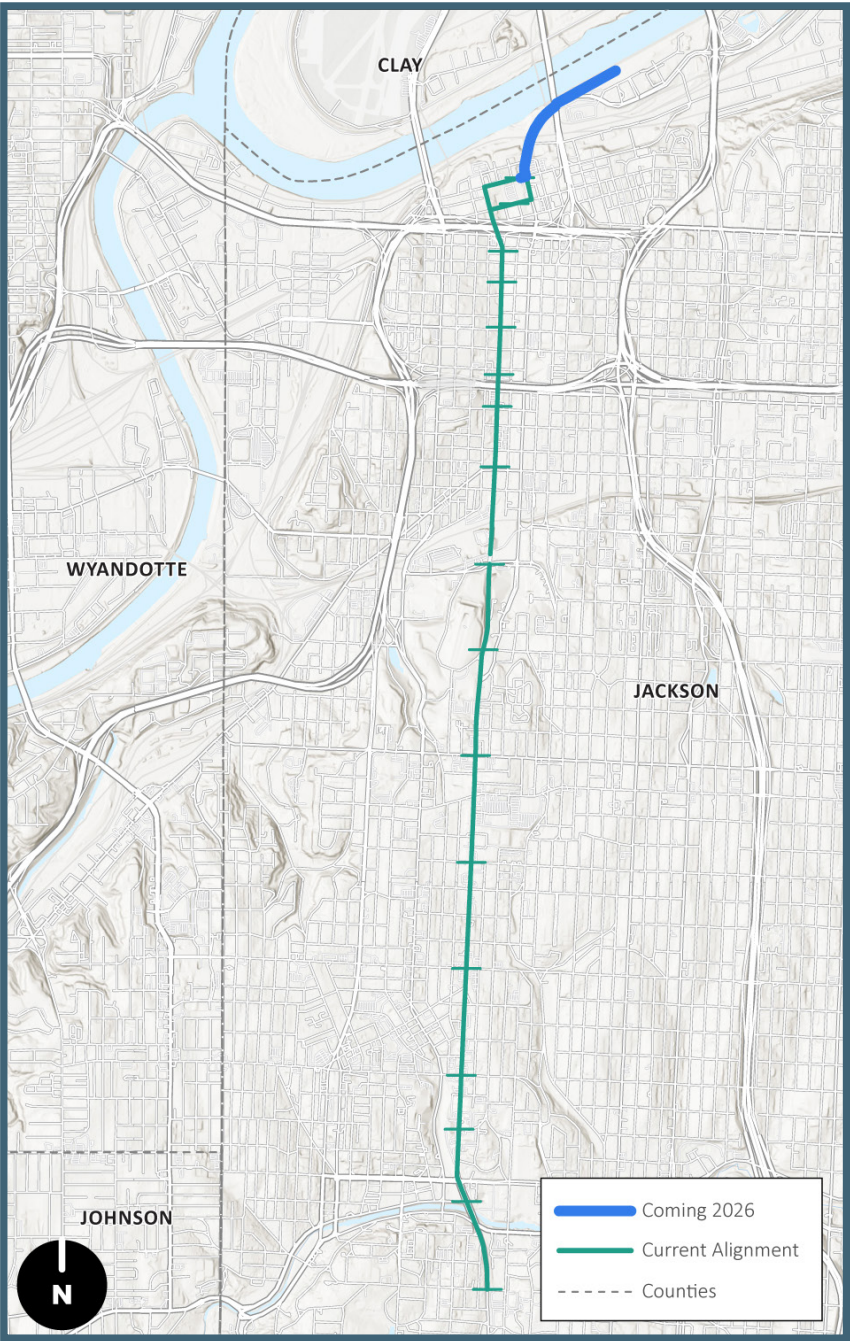
Table 2 – RideKC Service Times

Source: RideKC GTFS Data

Time Period	Hours
Morning	6 – 9 a.m.
Midday	9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Afternoon	3 – 6 p.m.
Evening	6 – 10 p.m.
Night	10 p.m. – 12 a.m.

Figure 16 – KC Streetcar Route

Source: KCATA 2025 GTFS Data



Zero And Reduced Fare Programs

At the time of the publication of this plan, all services operating under the RideKC umbrella are not collecting fares from passengers. The region has been zero-fare since March 19, 2020. The future of the zero-fare model is uncertain, and regional conversations are underway to decide if this model will continue or not. The Kansas City Streetcar Authority has stated that no matter the outcome of these discussions, they aim to remain zero-fare for the foreseeable future.

Prior to the introduction of zero-fare, free and reduced fare types were in effect. They covered the following categories:

- Veterans
- Paratransit riders
- Students
- Safety net clientele
- Low-income

MICROTRANSIT

IRIS

IRIS is an app-based rideshare service that was introduced to the Kansas City region in 2023 as part of an effort to fill gaps in the fixed-route system and provide a more flexible demand-response style of service for riders. IRIS is operated under the RideKC brand in partnership with zTrip and RideCo. IRIS currently operates in Kansas City, Missouri, North Kansas City, parts of Wyandotte County, and Independence, Missouri. The future of IRIS regionally is uncertain, as several cities discontinued their services and long-term funding remains in question.

GEST

GEST is a recent addition to the region's microtransit services. Like IRIS, GEST is an app-based rideshare service that utilizes electric golf cart style vehicles. They currently operate in Gladstone, Liberty, Parkville, and Riverside.

RideKC Freedom OnDemand

Originally developed to serve individuals with disabilities, this service is now available to the public. It offers same-day, app-based ride scheduling with accessible vehicles and competitive fares, operating across much of the metro area.

199 Microtransit (Wyandotte County)

This service provides on-demand rides within Wyandotte County, including key destinations such as downtown Kansas City, Kansas, and the University of Kansas Medical Center. It supports residents with flexible travel options and connections to fixed-route transit.

298 NKC Flex

While North Kansas City (NKC) Flex is technically part of IRIS, this service operates a different span of service (6 a.m. to 8 p.m.) than the other IRIS service areas (4 a.m. to 11 p.m.).

499 Microtransit (Johnson County)

Serving Johnson County, this microtransit option connects riders to major employment centers, shopping areas, and transit hubs. It is especially useful in suburban areas where fixed-route bus service is less frequent.

Bonner Springs On-Demand Service

Operated by Tiblow Transit, this service provides flexible transportation within the city limits of Bonner Springs, offering residents a convenient way to travel locally for errands, appointments, and connections to other transit options. It supports mobility in a suburban area where fixed-route bus service is limited.

RideLV (Leavenworth)

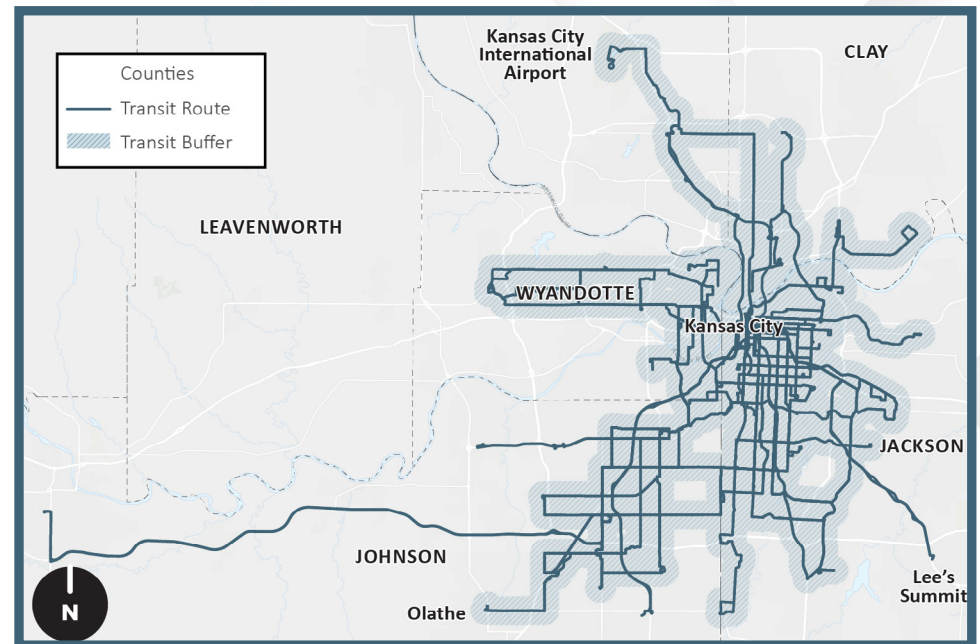
Operated by The Guidance Center, in partnership with KCATA, RideLV offers on-demand service within city limits, helping residents access local destinations and connect to regional transit options.

Lee's Summit On-Demand Service

This service, operated by OATS (Operating Above the Standard) transit, enables Lee's Summit residents to schedule rides within the city limits. It provides convenient access to key destinations such as shopping centers, medical facilities, and transit hubs, making it valuable for individuals without a personal vehicle or access to fixed-route transit.

**Figure 17 – Regional Complimentary ADA
¾ Mile Fixed Route Transit Buffer**

Source: RideKC 2025 GTFS Data



ADA AND ADA-COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT SERVICES

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services are available for customers who are unable to use fixed-route bus and streetcar services due to their disability. This service is offered in the Kansas City, Missouri metro area, Wyandotte County, Kansas and Independence, Missouri, and Johnson County, Kansas. Federal regulations define the service area as being within 3/4 mile of a local fixed route when that route is in operation. A map of this 3/4-mile area is shown in Figure 17 – Regional Complimentary ADA ¾ Mile Fixed Route Transit Buffer.

Non-ADA paratransit services are offered in Kansas City, Missouri, Wyandotte County, Kansas, Independence, Missouri and Johnson County, Kansas. Each area has its own residence requirement, service area and pricing. Below are some of the general guidelines:

Independence, Missouri | Kansas City, Missouri | Wyandotte County, Kansas - If you are 65 or older and/or have a disability and live in Independence, Missouri, Kansas City, Missouri or Wyandotte County, Kansas, you may be eligible for non-ADA RideKC Freedom service in these areas (called RideKC Freedom on Demand).

Johnson County, Kansas - If you are 65 or older, have a disability and live in Johnson County, Kansas, you may be eligible for Johnson County Transit’s RideKC Freedom services and RideKC Freedom on Demand. Below in Table 3 is a list of transit agency-sponsored ADA complementary and non-ADA paratransit services in the Kansas City region, their eligibility requirements, service areas and operating characteristics.

Table 3 – List of Transit Agency Sponsored ADA Complementary and non-ADA Services

Service Name	Eligible User	Service Area	Operating Characteristics
RideKC Freedom (Kansas City, Missouri, Independence, and Wyandotte County)	Must be approved through the ADA eligibility process. Eligibility is specific to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).	ADA paratransit service provided within ¾ mile of local fixed-route bus and streetcar service.	Operating hours mirror the hours of adjacent fixed-route transit service. Advanced reservations are required.
RideKC Freedom (Johnson County)	Must be approved through the eligibility process. Riders must meet one of the following criteria: documented disability, age 65 or older, or meet income requirements for reduced-fare programs.	Non-ADA paratransit service provided throughout Johnson County, with limited regional connections to Kansas City, Missouri, and Wyandotte County.	Operating hours are generally Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Trip reservations are required in advance.
Johnson County SWIFT	Only available to Johnson County Developmental Support clients.	Johnson County.	Provides transportation services for Johnson County Developmental Support clients to employment sites, training programs, and sheltered workshops.
RideKC Freedom On-Demand	Open to the general public. Discounted fares are available for ADA-certified and eligible RideKC Freedom users.	Service area includes Kansas City, Missouri; Independence, Missouri; Wyandotte County, Kansas; and Johnson County, Kansas.	App-based, on-demand shared-ride service. Same-day booking is available. Operating hours vary by day, generally from early morning to late evening.

HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

County and Municipal Programs

Counties and municipalities across the Kansas City region play a critical role in supporting transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and low-income residents. These programs typically operate demand-response or specialized transportation services within local jurisdictions and often serve residents who may not qualify for ADA paratransit or who live outside fixed-route service areas.

Many county and municipal programs are designed to support essential trips such as medical appointments, grocery shopping, social services, employment, and senior nutrition programs. These services are commonly funded through a combination of local government revenues, federal and state grants. Some programs operate their own fleets, while others contract with private providers or non-profit organizations.

Transit Agency Programs

Regional transit agencies provide several specialized transportation programs beyond traditional fixed-route service to support mobility for transportation-disadvantaged populations. These programs include ADA complementary paratransit, non-ADA paratransit, microtransit, and demand-response services that improve flexibility and access for riders who cannot reliably use fixed-route transit.

KCATA, JCT, UGT, and other RideKC partners operate a range of programs such as RideKC Freedom, RideKC Freedom OnDemand, IRIS, Swift, IndeAccess, and county-operated microtransit services. These services provide door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation for eligible riders, including older adults and individuals with disabilities, often at reduced or subsidized fares.

These programs are funded through a combination of FTA Section 5310 funds, local government contributions, Medicaid and VA reimbursements, and operating revenues. While transit agency programs provide essential mobility for thousands of residents, many providers face challenges related to staffing shortages, vehicle availability, funding stability, and service-hour limitations, which is something that was mentioned in previous workshops and stated in many responses in the provider survey. Coordination among agencies remains critical to minimizing duplication and ensuring that services are delivered efficiently across jurisdictional boundaries.

Aging Agency Programs

Aging agencies across the region play an important role in helping older adults remain mobile and connected to essential services. Through funding from the Older Americans Act (OAA), state programs, and local matching funds, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) support transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping, senior centers, and nutrition programs.

Services are provided through contracted transportation providers, volunteer driver programs, and senior or community-based vans, often serving older adults with limited incomes, mobility challenges, or no access to a personal vehicle. As the region's older adult population continues to grow, demand for these services is increasing, while agencies face challenges related to funding, rising costs, and driver availability.

HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION SERVICE ORIGIN-DESTINATION DATA

To better understand travel patterns in the region, MARC staff gathered origin/destination (OD) data. Replica was used to source the data in the maps that follow. Replica is a third-party web-based software company that ingests various data sets and acts as a data library and mapping tool. With that data, we can map the home locations per square mile and top destinations per square mile for people in the Kansas City area. The data used for the maps below is for travelers over the age of 65 with one car or less.

Origin Data

The map below in Figure 18 shows the origins of trips taken by people in the Kansas City region over the age of 65 who own one car or less. The map indicates that most residents in this category live inside the I-435/I-470/MO-291 highway loop. The majority of these residents live in south Kansas City, Missouri and northeast and central Johnson County.

Destination Data

The destination data map in Figure 19 below shows where the trips mentioned above terminate. Most travelers end their trips in the urban areas of the Kansas City region, like central Kansas City, Missouri, and Overland Park. Most cities on the map have a hotspot in their centers.

Figure 18 – Origin of Trips from One Car Households Over Age 65

Source: Replica, Spring 2025 Dataset, Block Group Level

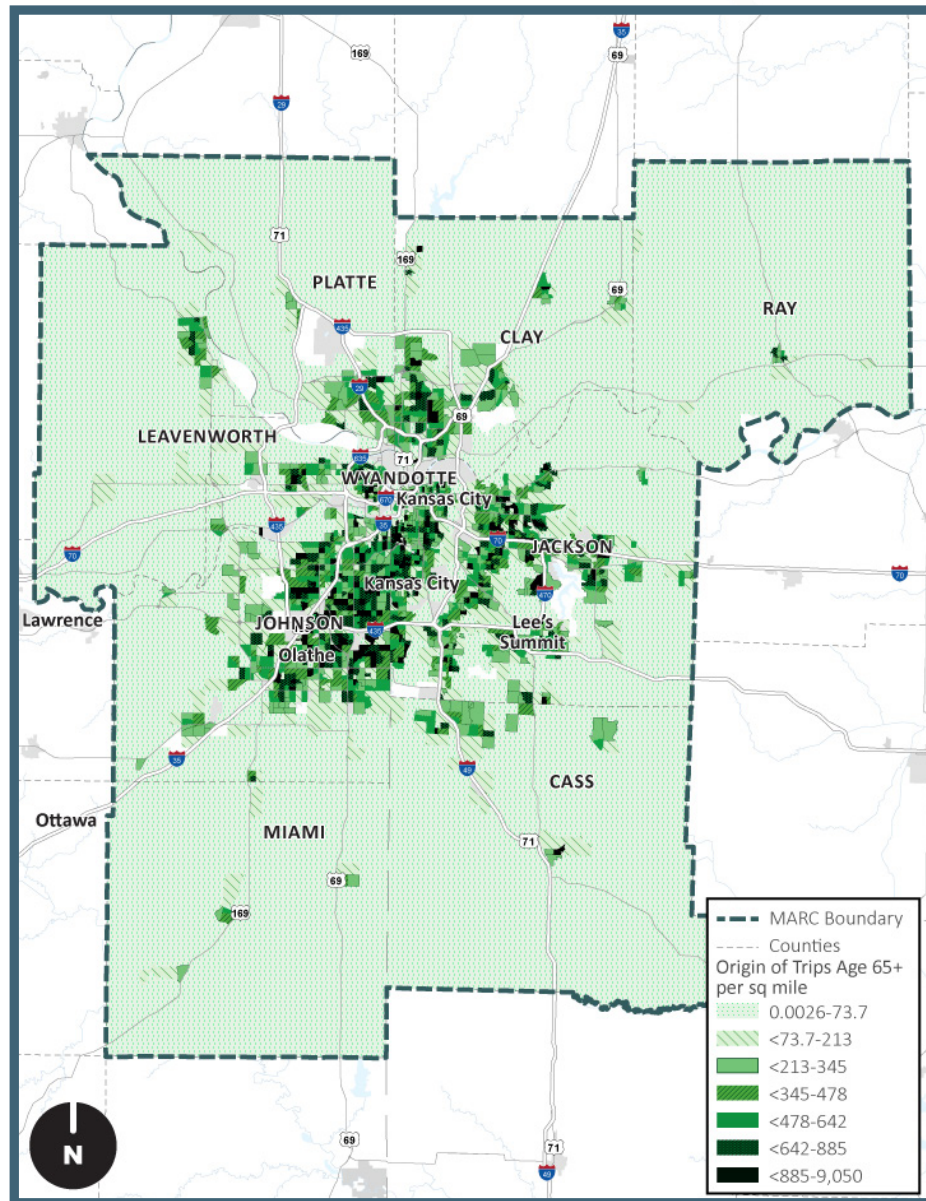


Figure 19 – Destination of Trips from One Car Households Over Age 65

Source: Replica, Spring 2025 Dataset, Block Group Level

