

14.0 EQUITY

Transportation Outlook 2040 envisions a safe, balanced, multi-modal transportation system that supports equitable access to opportunities and protects the environment. The plan’s policy framework defines equity as ensuring that all people have the opportunity to contribute, connect and thrive.

The region’s transportation system should contribute to increasing economic opportunity for residents, particularly those who are disadvantaged. The system should contribute to improving the built environment, helping to create vibrant places and encouraging reinvestment, particularly in disadvantaged areas that include higher concentrations of minority populations and low-income households. The system should also enable safe and secure travel, perform reliably and efficiently, and offer transportation choices that support the reduction of health disparities.

The concept of equity, as it relates to transportation, also includes fairness, justice and impartiality. This includes carefully considering equity issues when determining how future federal and state transportation funds will be invested, how our diverse population’s interests will be considered, and how those populations will be invited to participate in the planning process.

As the metropolitan planning organization for the bistate Kansas City region, MARC strives to make equity an integral part of all transportation planning and programming decisions. This means inviting all persons to participate and provide public input, incorporating environmental justice into the planning process, ensuring nondiscrimination, and supporting equitable access to opportunity.



MARC integrates equity in its transportation planning and programming processes through a number of programs and policies outlined below. This ensures compliance with federal standards and maximizes opportunities for equitable access and participation in decision-making.

Title VI

MARC's Title VI Program — as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 — ensures that no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefit of or subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any programs that receive federal funding. Every effort is made to ensure nondiscrimination in all of MARC's programs and activities — whether those programs and activities are federally funded or not. When distributing federal funds to contractors or other governmental entities, MARC includes Title VI language in all written agreements and monitors for compliance.

The four MARC program areas most closely affected by Title VI are:

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
- Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).
- Public Participation Plan.

For more information on these areas and MARC's Title VI program, see [MARC's Title VI Program online](#).

Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.¹

MARC incorporates environmental justice into its planning and decision-making processes by identifying minority and low-income populations, engaging those populations in the transportation decision-making process, determining how improvements in the region's transportation system could best meet the needs of these disadvantaged populations, considering whether these disadvantaged populations are subjected to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, and addressing and mitigating those effects.

For more information on how MARC addresses environmental justice at the regional level, see [MARC's Environmental Justice Analysis](#).





Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits, under certain circumstances, discrimination based on disability. MARC supports ADA through public involvement in the transportation planning process, and by providing support to local jurisdictions with periodic training and education of responsibilities under the ADA. MARC also ensures nondiscrimination in the access to and operation of its programs, services and activities, and in its hiring or employment practices, which do not allow discrimination based on race, color, sex, national origin, age, military status or disability.

For more information on MARC's commitment to work toward full ADA compliance in the Kansas City region, see the [Proclamation of Recommitment to Full Implementation of ADA](#).

Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBEs) are firms or small businesses that are owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, including minorities and women. To be deemed a DBE, the business entity must be

certified by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). MARC has established a DBE program in accordance with regulations of the USDOT, 49 CFR, part 26, which ensures DBEs have equal opportunity to receive and participate in USDOT-assisted contracts. MARC also encourages all qualified businesses, including DBEs, to actively participate in the procurement of its sponsored contracts. It is also MARC's policy to:

- Ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of USDOT-assisted contracts.
- Create a level playing field on which DBEs can compete fairly for USDOT-assisted contracts.
- Ensure that the DBE program is narrowly tailored in accordance with applicable law.
- Ensure that only firms that fully meet 49 CFR, part 26 eligibility standards are permitted to participate as DBEs.
- Help remove barriers to the participation of DBEs in USDOT-assisted contracts.
- Assist in the development of firms to compete successfully in the marketplace outside the DBE program.

MARC encourages local and state agencies that use federal transportation funds in the Kansas City region to take steps to not only meet minimum DBE requirements, but also to ensure employment opportunities for disadvantaged residents, particularly for projects in environmental justice areas.

For more information on how MARC ensures nondiscrimination in the procurement process, see [MARC's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program](#).



Limited English Proficiency Plan

Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language or who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English can be considered limited English proficient, or LEP. According to USDOT Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons, *"Title VI and its implementing regulations require that recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access by LEP persons. Recipients should use the guidance to determine how best to comply with statutory and regulatory obligations to provide meaningful access to the benefits, services, information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are LEP."*

As a recipient of federal funds, MARC takes reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to its programs and activities by LEP persons. MARC is committed to providing quality services to all citizens, including LEP individuals, as well as language assistance under certain circumstances. For more information on MARC's LEP programs and activities, see the [Limited English Proficiency Plan](#).

Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities

Current federal surface transportation legislation includes the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (FTA Section 5310). This program provides funding to support the transportation needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities where transportation services are unavailable, insufficient or inappropriate.

Although it is not the direct recipient of Section 5310 funds for the Kansas City region, MARC develops the [Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan](#) that guides the program and serves as the foundation for the competitive selection process for Section 5310 funds. The plan also outlines how transit agencies, social service agencies, municipalities and other transportation providers can most efficiently and effectively work together to improve regional mobility for individuals with special transportation needs. As the number of older adults in the Kansas City region increases, it will be even more important for transportation project designs and investments to address mobility and other considerations for this population.

2014 Kansas City Regional Equity Summit

On Oct. 4, 2014, the Kansas City Regional Equity Network held its third annual summit, which focused on social equity and transportation. MARC led a breakout session on equity in the regional transportation planning process, and received valuable feedback from equity network partners on how the transportation planning process can improve to better address equity and equitable outcomes.



Public participation

In the context of transportation planning, public participation provides an opportunity for citizens to help define the goals on which transportation policies and investments are based, make recommendations for achieving them, and share local knowledge about the impacts of new transportation system investments. Fundamentally, public participation is “based on the belief that people whose lives are affected by transportation planning and investment decisions have a right to be involved in the decision-making process and influence choices that are made. Directly engaging citizens in this process promotes successful problem solving, yields diverse voices and new ideas, and gives the public a sense of ownership of the developed solutions.” (MARC Public Participation Plan).

During the update of *Transportation Outlook 2040*, MARC staff conducted public involvement activities as outlined in MARC’s Public Participation Plan. Various transportation stakeholders were engaged, as well as organizations, agencies and members of the public. This included youth, older adults, environmental justice populations (e.g., minority and low-income populations), LEP individuals, social service providers, churches, faith-based organizations, ethnic organizations and advocacy groups. MARC has worked with a number of regional and local groups to establish a Regional Equity Network, and works with this network and other organizations to encourage broader public participation, particularly for under-represented populations.

For more information, see [MARC’s Public Participation Plan](#).

Needs assessment

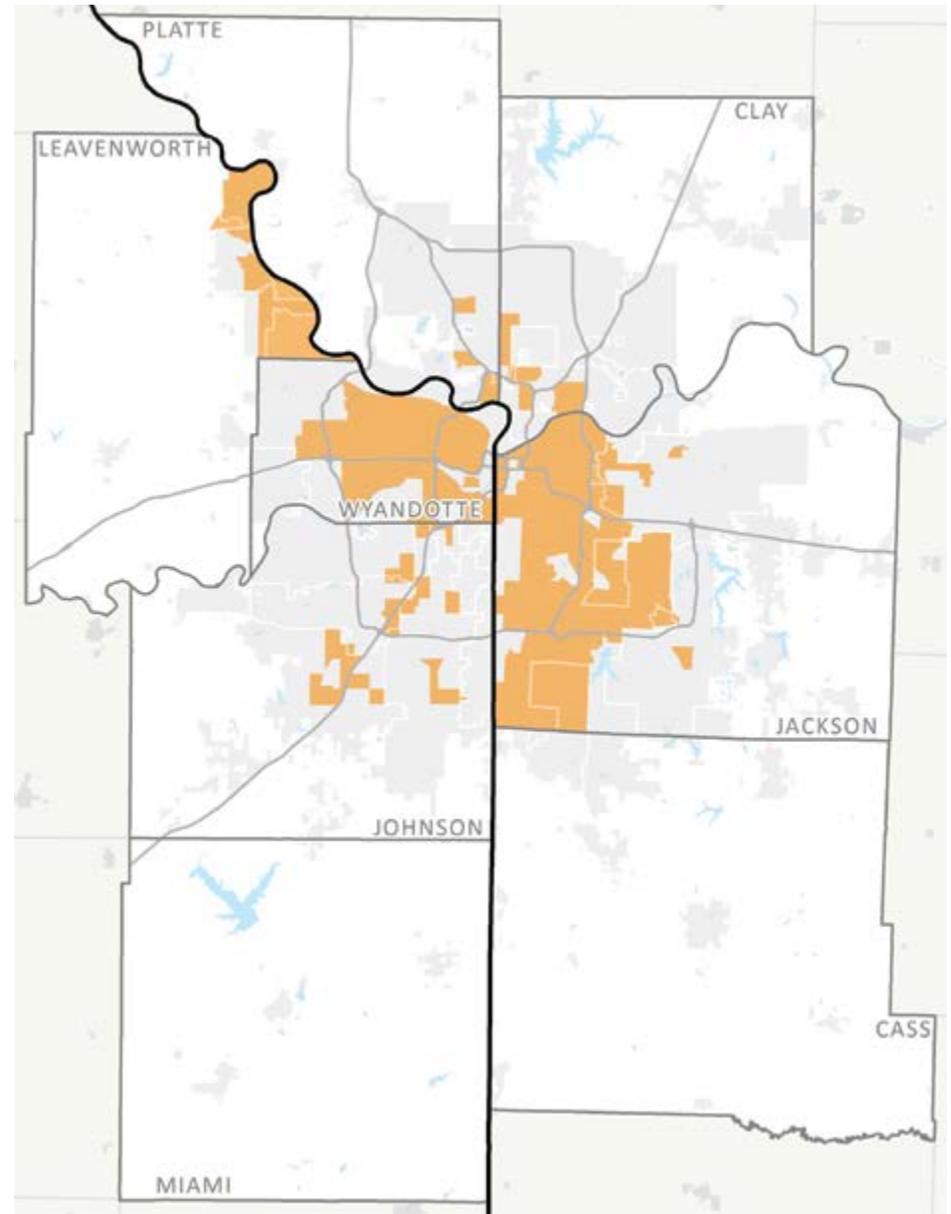
Across the bistate Kansas City region, MARC, local governments, community organizations and other stakeholders are developing plans, policies and programs to make the region healthier and more vibrant, sustainable and equitable. Understanding our region as it exists today and how it might look in the future are critical steps in planning for greater equity. As MARC's [Environmental Justice Analysis](#) indicates, 510,817 residents in the MARC region are persons of color, 83,253 households are below federal poverty thresholds, and 618,261 people live in Environmental Justice areas.²

Equity Profile

In 2013, PolicyLink and the University of Southern California's Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) published [An Equity Profile of the Kansas City Region](#) for MARC and its local partners to use as a tool for addressing equity in the Kansas City region. The analysis helped MARC better understand the region's minority and low-income populations and their transportation choices, providing data about car ownership, average commute length, and mode share by income.

The Equity Profile shows that communities of color are driving the region's population growth, making their economic inclusion essential to the region's success. However, the report also notes wide racial gaps in income, health and opportunity in the region. In terms of transportation, the Equity Profile pointed out many challenges. Persons of color and low-income individuals are more reliant on public transit for transportation and are less likely to own a motor vehicle. But reverse commutes out of Kansas City's urban center and into suburban areas, where transit is less frequent, present challenges.

Figure 14.1: Environmental Justice areas in Greater Kansas City



Transit use generally declines as income rises.

Figures 14.2 shows the percent of workers using public transit by annual earnings and race/ethnicity. (ACS 2009–2013)

- Income plays a role in determining who uses Kansas City’s transit system to get to work.
- Very low-income residents are most likely to get to work using public transit.
- The use of transit tends to decline rapidly as income rises.

Figure 14.2: Transit use by income

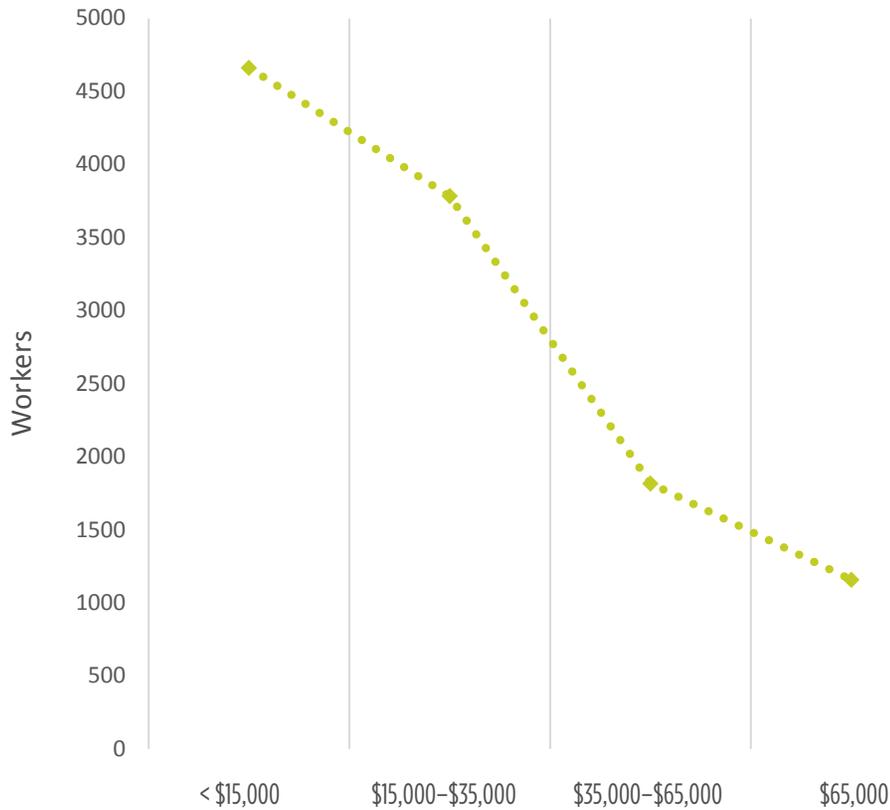
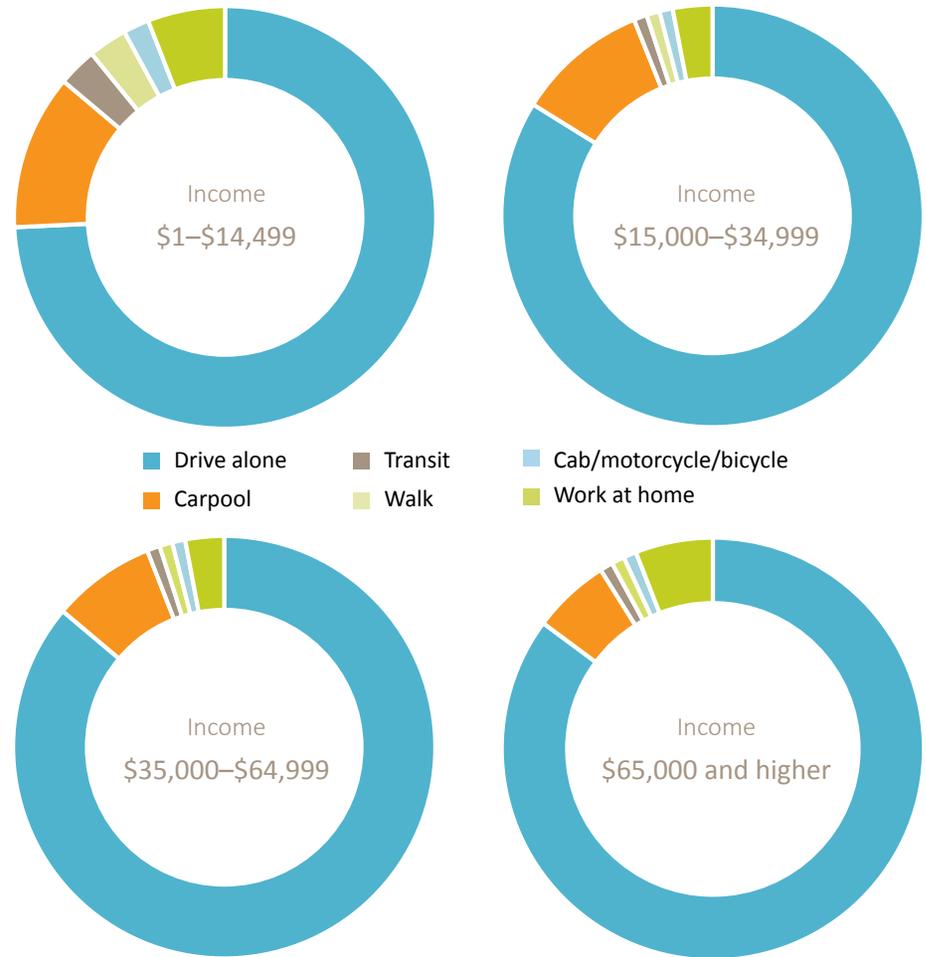


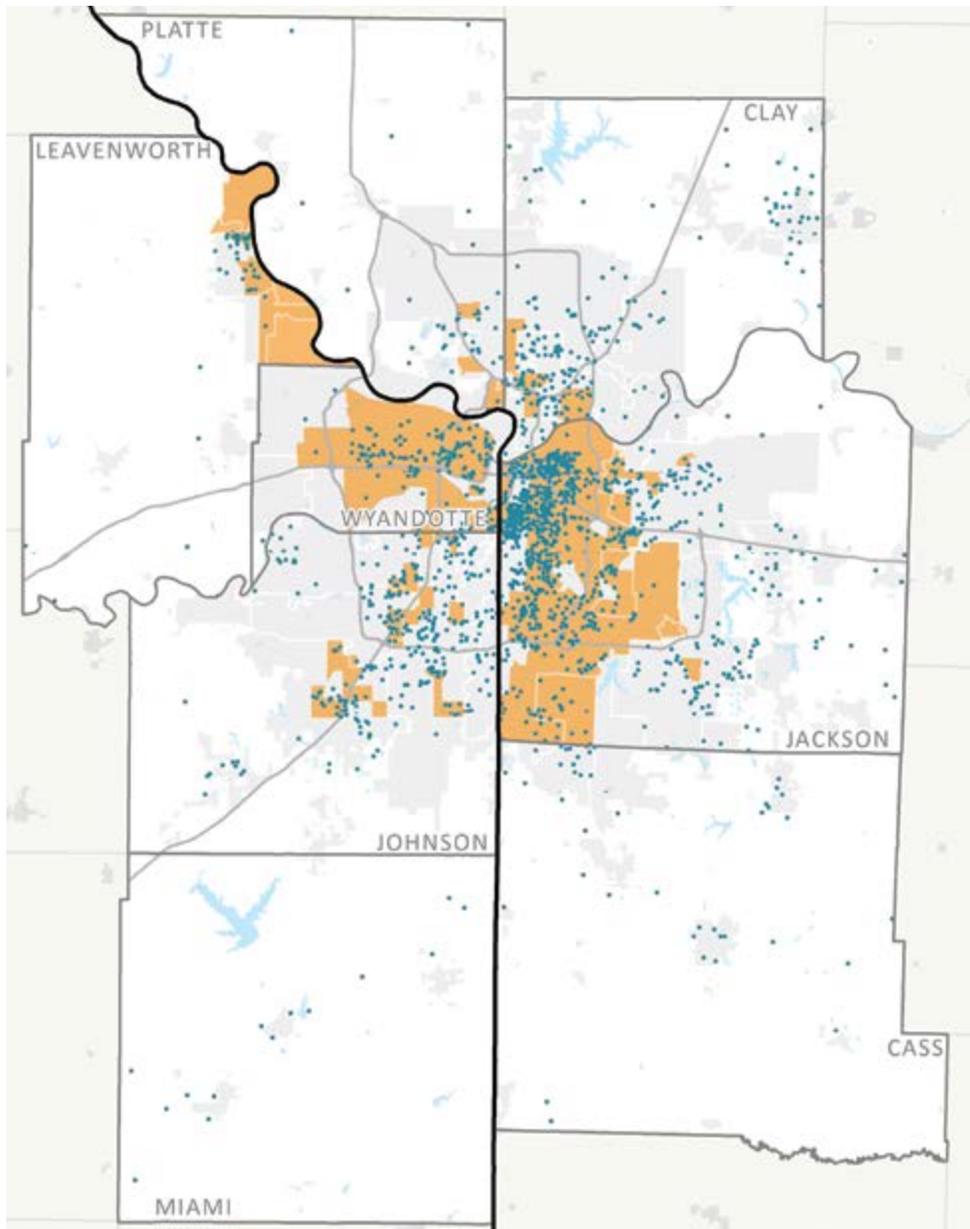
Figure 14.3: Mode for work trips by income



Lower-income residents are less likely to drive alone to work.

- In terms of auto dependency, Kansas City ranks 27th out of the top 150 metros.
- The vast majority of residents in the region — 83 percent — drive alone to work; however, single-driver commuting varies by income.

Figure 14.4: Households without vehicles available



Households without cars

- Car ownership varies across the region.
- Neighborhoods with relatively high shares of zero-vehicle households are not only found in the urban core of Kansas City, but also at the region's periphery.
- Households without cars are particularly high in areas with high concentrations of minorities.

• 1 Dot = 10 Households
■ Env. Justice Tracts

U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

Transit accessibility

The lack of investment in public transit negatively impacts the most disadvantaged residents. As pointed out in [MARC's Peer Transit Analysis](#), the Kansas City region provides fewer modes of transportation services than a majority of its peer regions — Urbanized Areas (UZA) with similar size and density compared to the Kansas City UZA. Transit investments in the Kansas City region are only 58 percent of the average total investment provided by peer regions — only \$71 per capita in annual transit operations in the Kansas City metro, compared to an average \$164 per capita in the peer regions. This lack of investment in transit is transparent in regional job accessibility statistics and ridership numbers.

The region's current transit system primarily connects workers to jobs in the region's central employment core, which contains 158,359 jobs, or only about 17 percent of the region's total employment. An analysis by the Brookings Institution³ reported that only 18 percent of all jobs in the region are reachable by transit in 90 minutes or less. Additionally, a MARC analysis of the transit system found that only 21 percent of the region's workers live and work within one-half mile of a transit stop as of 2011.

Figure 14.5: Existing transit service (for work)

Employment within one-half mile of transit stop	536,634
Total employment in the region	928,315
Percent of employment within one-half mile of transit stop	57.8%

Source: 2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data for employment and 2013 Transit Stop Data.

Note: This is merely employment in context of existing 2013 transit stop locations, and does not take into account the transit frequency for these routes or user convenience.

Jobs accessibility

The urban core of the Kansas City region has lost population for a number of years, and a significant share of the region's employment has moved to the suburbs. This can be attributed to the region's extensive interstate highways which have facilitated the dispersal of jobs and housing.

MARC projections, as shown in Forecast Employment Change 2010–2040 (to right); indicate that substantial employment growth will continue to occur in the outer-ring suburban areas, along with some loss of jobs in urban core areas, over the next 30 years. Consequently, the data illustrates challenges that disadvantaged populations living in Environmental Justice areas experience in accessing job opportunities.

Another assessment of employment found an imbalance between the level of job concentrations and workers in the region, as illustrated in the jobs-to-worker balance map (Figure 14.8). Although large concentrations of jobs exist around the urban core of the Kansas City region, particularly where there are higher-than-average poverty rates and higher-than-average non-white populations, a mismatch exists between workers' skills and the jobs available for those skills. This gap presents a challenge to residents, especially those who lack personal transportation and depend on public transit to access jobs.

Figure 14.6: Forecast employment change, 2010–2040

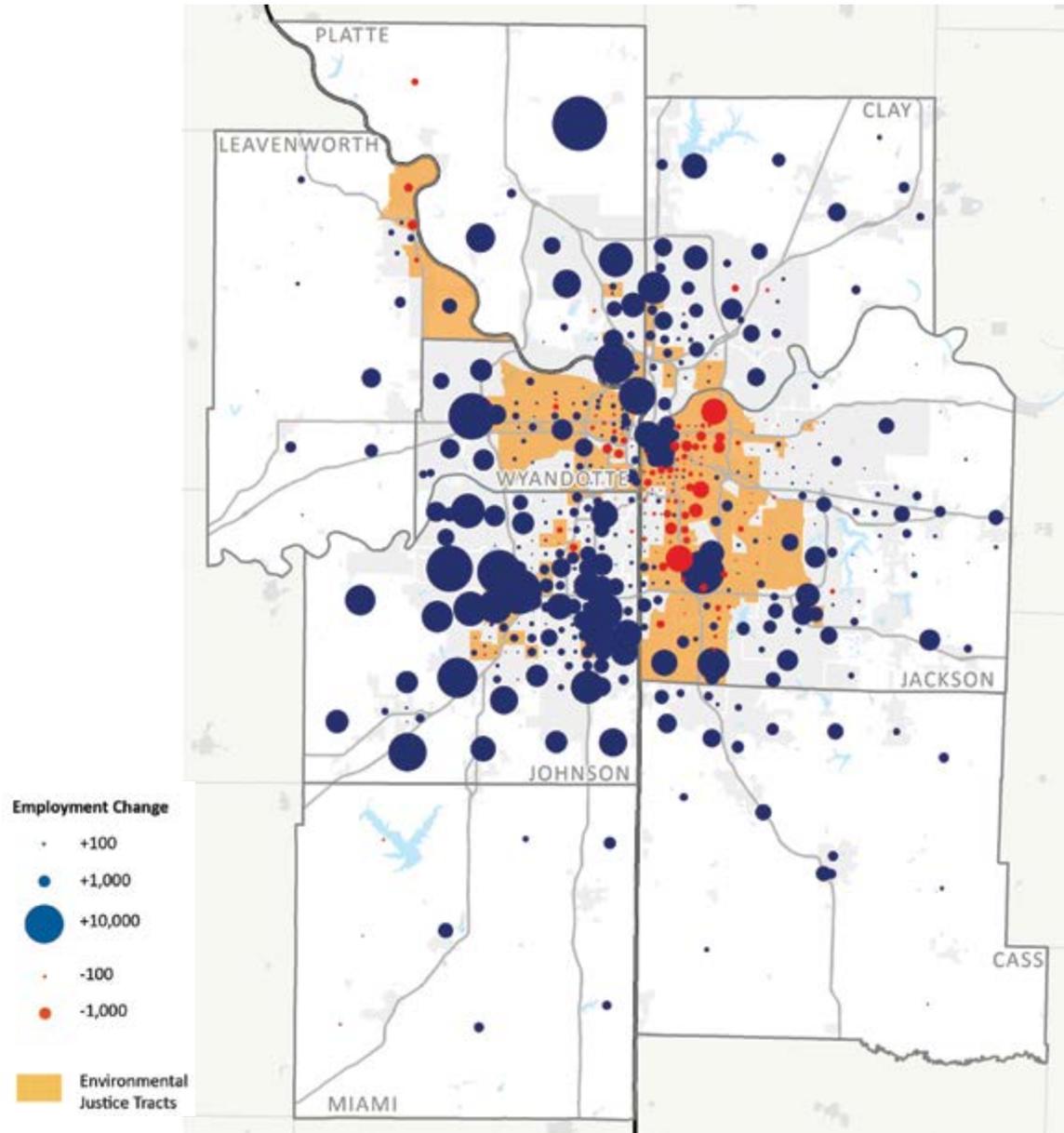
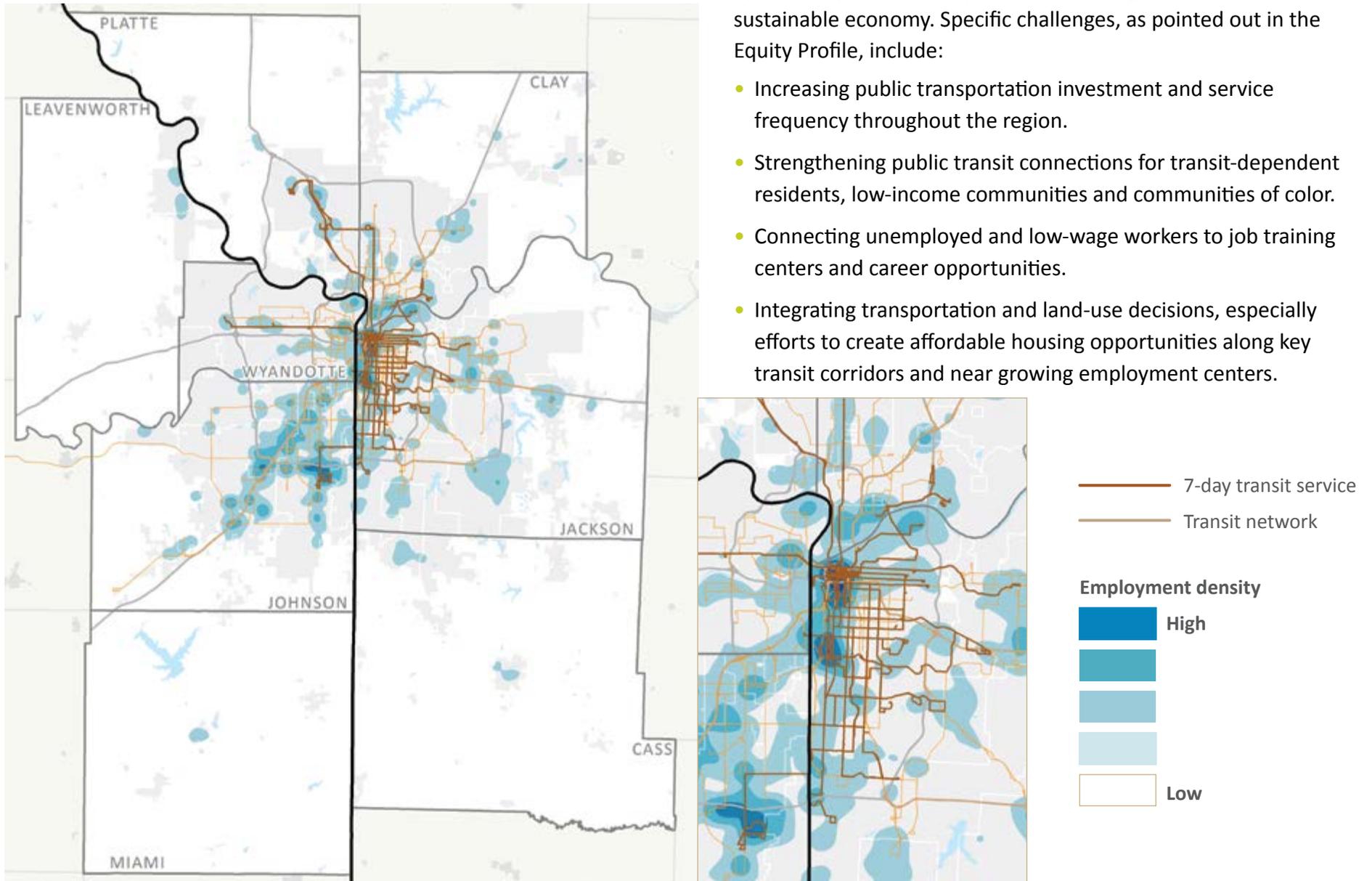


Figure 14.7: Accessibility of public transit resources



To ensure a prosperous future, the region must increase economic opportunity and take steps toward building a more equitable and sustainable economy. Specific challenges, as pointed out in the Equity Profile, include:

- Increasing public transportation investment and service frequency throughout the region.
- Strengthening public transit connections for transit-dependent residents, low-income communities and communities of color.
- Connecting unemployed and low-wage workers to job training centers and career opportunities.
- Integrating transportation and land-use decisions, especially efforts to create affordable housing opportunities along key transit corridors and near growing employment centers.

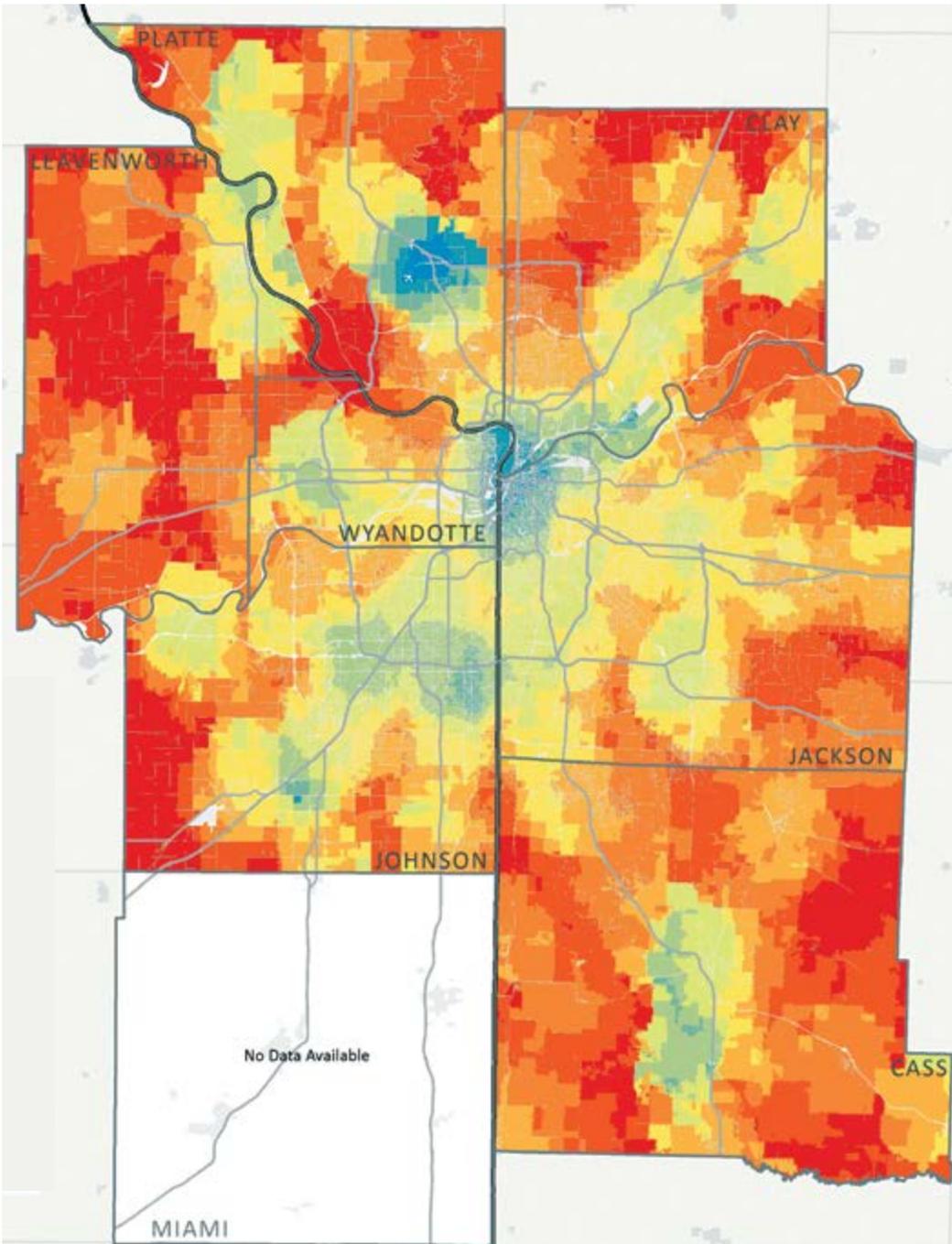
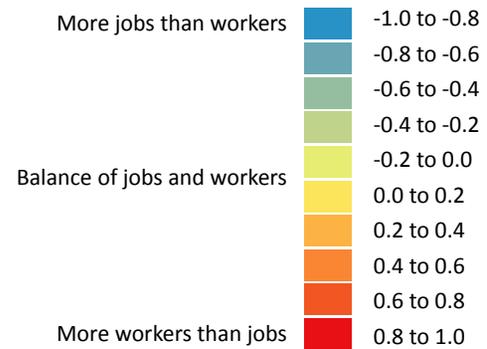


Figure 14.8: Jobs-to-worker balance

This map shows jobs in an area compared to the total number of local workers. Areas shown in yellow and green have achieved the best jobs-to-worker balance.



Strategies

To ensure that all people have the opportunity to thrive, it must consider the needs of all persons to connect to opportunities for education, jobs, health services, physical activity and social interaction. Additionally, MARC must ensure nondiscrimination and equitable access to opportunities through work and strategies. The following strategies will help the region meet its transportation equity goals.

14-1: Ensure that all persons have the opportunity to participate in the regional transportation decision-making process and provide public input.

- a. Continue to implement the Public Participation Plan to ensure that all persons have the ability to make their voices heard.
- b. Engage local jurisdictions, transportation stakeholders and community members in transportation planning and programming processes.
- c. MARC will continue working with the Regional Equity Network to encourage broader public participation, particularly among under-represented populations.

14-2: Expand affordable and accessible transportation choices suitable for all types of households, families and incomes.

- a. Work toward implementation of the Smart Moves Regional Transit Vision.
- b. Encourage local jurisdictions to increase transit service investment and frequency to support opportunities that benefit the region's workforce, especially those dependent on transit for access to jobs, grocery stores and health care facilities.
- c. Continue to work on connecting the unemployed and low-wage workers to job training centers and career opportunities.

14-3: Build complete streets

- a. Promote the concepts of context-sensitive solutions and complete streets in the region's transportation planning, project development and project selection processes.
- b. Develop a technical framework to analyze and identify opportunities for incremental complete street improvements.
- c. Encourage, facilitate and incentivize the development and adoption of complete street policies by local jurisdictions.

14-4: Create vibrant, healthy and cohesive places along corridors and centers in areas with disadvantaged populations.

- a. Continue to analyze the impacts of regional transportation investments, specifically human health and environmental impacts, on disadvantaged populations.
- b. Provide Creating Sustainable Places (CSP) planning tools and resources to local jurisdictions throughout the region.
- c. Evaluate transportation projects in the context of current and future community environments through the Regional Complete Streets Policy.

Transportation Outlook 2040				
Policy framework, strategies and goals:	Strategy 14-1: Public input	Strategy 14-2: Expand choices	Strategy 14-3: Complete Streets	Strategy 14-4: Create Sustainable Places
 Economic vitality		X	X	X
 Placemaking			X	
 Equity	X	X	X	X
 Transportation choices	X		X	
 Safety and security			X	
 System condition				X
 System performance		X	X	
 Public health		X	X	
 Environment			X	X
 Climate change and energy use		X	X	

Notes:

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2014). Environmental Justice. Retrieved Aug. 14, 2014, from EPA: <http://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>.

² Environmental Justice area — defined in two ways: 1) Census tracts with a greater percentage of minority populations than the Kansas City metropolitan planning boundary average (26.94 percent); and/or 2) Census tracts where more than 20 percent of the households are in poverty.

³ Tomer, A. Kneebone, E., Puentes, R., & Berube, A. (2011). Missed Opportunity: Transit and Jobs in Metropolitan America. Washington, D.C.: Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings.