

Given projected trends in sales tax revenue, KCATA cannot responsibly assume that new resources will become available for additional service in KCMO 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 smart phone 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 KCMO, 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 every 30 minutes at all times, to reflect relatively strong demand.
 - ▶ However, nearly half of Route 201 is located outside KCMO. The 201 goes through the cities of North Kansas City and Gladstone, and the villages of Oaks, 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 KCMO 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 east-west 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.