

2011

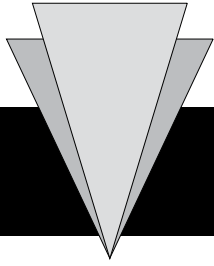
Federal Legislative Agenda

for the Greater Kansas City Region

MARC

Mid-America Regional Council





2011

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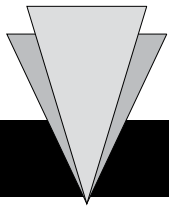
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The MARC Board appreciates the support that Congress has provided the Kansas City region through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act.

Transportation, Energy, Environmental, Head Start and other funds have contributed to important community projects and helped a significant number of area residents attain or maintain employment during difficult economic times.



Mid-America Regional Council

Advancing Regional Progress • Working Together

The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) serves nine counties in the Greater Kansas City region, including Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri, and Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties in Kansas.



Local elected leaders from the nine counties and six largest cities make up the Mid-America Regional Council's Board of Directors. MARC serves as the metropolitan planning agency for the region, promoting regional cooperation on issues that reach across the boundaries of individual communities.

MARC's role in the community includes:

- **Leadership** — Identifying regional challenges and acting as a problem-solving forum; promoting consensus and commitment to regional solutions; and educating and engaging the public in decision-making process.
- **Planning** — Coordinating policies that guide progress in the region; developing regional plans for transportation, the environment, emergency response and more; conducting research and providing technical support to local leaders.
- **Action** — Advocating for regional issues at the state and federal levels; providing cost-effective, cooperative services for local governments; allocating resources for regional systems.

Numerous opportunities exist for each city and county to be involved in planning through MARC's committees and programs, which are summarized in the overview on pages 2–6.

Each year, the MARC Board of Directors identifies federal legislative, regulatory, and funding issues of concern to the Kansas City region and prepares positions on those issues. In January 2011, the MARC Board adopted the legislative platform found on pages 7–14.

▼ Efficient Transportation

Lead Committee:

Total Transportation Policy Committee (TTPC)

Staff Contact:

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As the official Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Kansas City region, MARC works with local government officials to develop regional transportation plans that guide the allocation of federal, state and local transportation dollars. These plans set the foundation for future investments within MARC's transportation planning boundaries, and local projects must be included in the plans to receive federal funds.

MARC works in cooperation with the Kansas and Missouri Departments of Transportation, local governments and transit providers on a wide range of issues that are important to residents, such as managing traffic congestion; improving the region's transit system; increasing bicycle and pedestrian travel options; supporting efficient movement of goods and freight; meeting the transportation needs of elderly, disabled and disadvantaged residents; and promoting transportation safety.

Current/Recent Project Highlights:

- In June, the MARC Board approved Transportation Outlook 2040, the region's long-range transportation plan. The plan includes a 30-year forecast of regional population and employment growth patterns and a regional land-use strategy that supports activity centers and connected transportation corridors.
- MARC and its partners are working to improve transportation infrastructure through a \$50 million TIGER grant (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) the region received through the federal stimulus program. The grant will fund

improvements in the Green Impact Zone in Kansas City, Mo., and along key transit corridors in other parts of the region.

- Work is underway on Phase III of the Smart Moves Regional Transit Plan. The first two phases focused on urban and commuter corridors. Phase III includes systems integration and implementation planning.
- Operation Green Light coordinates traffic signal timing across jurisdictional boundaries, helping to reduce traffic congestion.
- MetroGreen® is an interconnected system of public and private natural areas, greenways and trails linking communities throughout the metro area. Over 200 miles of the planned 1,144-mile system have been completed.
- MARC's RideShare program helps commuters find alternatives to driving alone, coordinating services and tools for both employers and commuters.
- In partnership with the Destination: Safe coalition, MARC works to incorporate the safety of the traveling public into transportation plans, helps administer grants, collects data and coordinates public outreach efforts to promote transportation safety.
- MARC maintains a regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that lists transportation projects to be implemented in the next five years within the metropolitan planning boundary. The TIP must incorporate all federally funded projects and all capacity projects regardless of funding source. Periodically, MARC solicits new project proposals from state departments of transportation, local jurisdictions and public transit providers for inclusion in the TIP. In 2010, MARC solicited projects for Surface Transportation, Congestion Mitigation Air Quality and Transportation Enhancement funds.

▼ Healthy Environment

Lead Committees:

Air Quality Forum, Solid Waste Management District (SWMD), and Regional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy (REECS) Steering Committee

Staff Contacts:

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MARC brings together local government representatives, state and federal officials, nonprofit organizations, and business and industry representatives to address issues related to air quality, water quality, solid waste management, energy conservation and green infrastructure.

Current/Recent Project Highlights:

- On the Missouri side of the region, the MARC Solid Waste Management District manages a Household Hazardous Waste mobile collection program and provides annual grants to encourage the development of local and regional waste reduction, reuse and recycling programs. The SWMD serves residents on both sides of the state line with its RecycleSpot.org website and special events like the annual recycling challenge.
- Through the MetroGreen program, MARC works closely with local parks and recreation departments and other local officials on plans for trails and greenways.
- MARC is responsible for air quality planning in the region. While Kansas City has historically enjoyed cleaner air than many metropolitan areas, new EPA regulations put the region at risk of violating ozone standards next year. MARC's Clean Air Action Plan contains formal commitments from area governments and businesses to voluntarily reduce ozone-forming emissions, both short- and long-term. MARC educates the public,

offers a daily SkyCast and works with a business partnership to encourage individual actions to reduce harmful emissions.

- MARC's water quality program helps develop tools and best practices for stormwater management, and coordinates a regional effort to help local governments meet federal NPDES Phase I and II regulatory requirements for public education and outreach.
- Energy efficiency and conservation are more recent focus areas for MARC. Through several recent grants, projects are underway to install efficient street lights, weatherize homes and businesses, improve building codes and develop a "green" workforce. While some of these initiatives are limited to a small number of communities at present, they may be expanded to broader areas in the future.

▼ Enhanced Emergency Response

Lead Committees:

Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee (RHSCC), Public Safety Communications Board

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MARC coordinates the region's 9-1-1 system, providing technical support, training and public education. MARC also administers a number of homeland security grants on behalf of the region, working through its Regional Homeland Security Coordinating Committee and various subcommittees to develop plans and protocols, conduct training and exercises, and support specialized response teams and equipment caches throughout the region. MARC also provides

coordination services for the Mid-America LEPC, which focuses on hazardous materials; MARCER, which coordinates emergency pre-hospital care; and the MEMC, which focuses on emergency management and preparedness.

Current/Recent Project Highlights:

- MARC supports the region's 45 Public Safety Answering Points which answer more than 1.5 million 9-1-1 calls each year. MARC coordinates equipment upgrades and maintenance services, manages the mapping software that helps dispatchers locate 9-1-1 calls, and provides more than 100 training courses each year for public safety communications personnel.
- MARC's emergency services program supports training and exercises that enhance local agencies' response capabilities, helping protect residents across the region.
- On behalf of the MEMC, MARC maintains an emergency preparedness website to help citizens plan for disasters. MARC also supports regional planning efforts for evacuation, sheltering and supporting special-needs populations in emergencies.
- MARC provides technical support for WebEOC, a crisis-management software used in local emergency operations centers; personnel accountability systems to ensure site security; a web-based information sharing network; and other technology solutions.
- With funding from homeland security grants, the RHSCC has provided training and equipment for enhanced response teams (hazardous materials, tactical and technical rescue) that are available to respond to incidents throughout the region as needed.
- The RHSCC provides support for mobile trailers located strategically around the region for quick response in emergencies.
- MARC coordinated the development of a Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, helping local jurisdictions ensure their eligibility for certain FEMA grants in the event of a disaster.

- MARC managed the installation and implementation of the RAMBIS communications interoperability system, which allows first responders to communicate across boundaries and across disciplines regardless of whether their systems use UHF, VHF or 800 MHz radios. MARC also provides coordination and support for the Metropolitan Area Regional Radio System (MARRS), a microwave system designed to improve day-to-day communications interoperability throughout the region.
- On behalf of the Mid-America LEPC, MARC maintains an extensive database of facilities that store and use hazardous materials in the region.
- MARC supports strong regional public health programs to help prevent and track disease outbreaks, improve pre-hospital emergency care and prepare for mass dispensing of medications in the event of a biological threat to public health.

▼ Effective Government

Lead Committees:

Managers Roundtable; Technical Forecast Committee

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MARC offers a number of programs and services designed to help local governments serve their communities better, including the Government Training Institute, which offers affordable, high-quality training; the Kansas City Regional

Purchasing Cooperative, which leverages purchasing power through coordinated bids and contracts; a Managers Roundtable for local government administrators; the First Suburbs Coalition, which helps inner-ring suburbs address issues common in these older communities; targeted assistance to small cities with grant applications and administration; economic forecasts; and data and mapping services.

Current/Recent Project Highlights:

- In addition to the hundreds of cost-effective training courses it offers each year, MARC's Government Training Institute can provide customized training to local government agencies. GTI also offers additional savings through its membership program.
- MARC created a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) plan to gain designation as an Economic Development District. Cities and counties in the MARC region may use this plan to meet grant application requirements established by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.
- Since 2003, the Kansas City Regional Purchasing Cooperative has saved local governments more than \$1.1 million by negotiating contracts that take advantage of combined purchasing power and save local government staff time.
- MARC's Small Cities Program provides grant writing and grant administration services to small communities in the region that have limited staff resources.
- KC Metro GIS, a consortium of local government geographic information systems users, helps cities and counties in the MARC region save money by sharing data and coordinating regional aerial photography flights on a regular basis.
- MARC's Research Services Department provides easy access to economic and demographic data, including biannual

forecasts that can help local governments to project tax revenues.

- The First Suburbs Coalition focuses on issues facing inner-ring suburbs, such as aging infrastructure and the need for redevelopment of commercial properties. The coalition also offers a low-interest loan program for homeowners in first suburbs who want to remodel older homes.
- Through a recent grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, MARC is coordinating regional and local plans for sustainable development. More than 60 local governments are participating in the Creating Sustainable Places initiative.

▼ Caring Communities

Lead Committees:

Commission on Aging; Safety Net Coalition; Early Learning Leadership Board; Partners in Quality; Mid-America Head Start Policy Council

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MARC offers support to the region's most vulnerable residents through a variety of programs for young children, the elderly and the disadvantaged. MARC's Metropolitan Council on Early Learning and Mid-America Head Start programs work to ensure that children enter school prepared to succeed; MARC's Area Agency on Aging provides a wide variety of services to seniors and their caregivers; and the Regional Health Care Initiative focuses on addressing health care challenges for uninsured and underinsured residents.

Current/Recent Project Highlights:

- MARC's Area Agency on Aging, serving Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri, maintains an extensive database of services and an information hotline for seniors and caregivers, 816-421-4980.
- MARC coordinates services at senior centers on the Missouri side of the region and oversees programs for home-delivered meals, special transportation services and long-term care ombudsmen.
- The Regional Health Care Initiative at MARC focuses on meeting the health care needs of the region's estimated 400,000 uninsured and underinsured residents. The Safety Net Coalition coordinates efforts to improve access to care, increase capacity and implement new technology solutions.
- MARC serves as the grantee for Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Clay, Jackson and Platte counties in Missouri. MARC contracts with four delegate agencies to serve more than 3,100 children in Head Start programs.
- The Metropolitan Council on Early Learning promotes quality child care that prepares children for success in school through scholarship programs for child care providers, a Quality Rating System that helps centers work towards continuous improvement, and compensation programs that help supplement teacher salaries.



Transportation Agenda

▼ Reauthorization of Federal Transportation Law

The MARC Board of Directors, working in cooperation with local and state officials, encourages the Congressional delegation to consider the region's position on reauthorization of the federal transportation law. The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act — a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) expired on Sept. 30, 2009, and Congress has authorized several extensions.

The Congressional delegation is urged to work with MARC and the states of Missouri and Kansas to authorize a new transportation law.

MARC worked with the Kansas and Missouri departments of transportation and local stakeholders to develop a position on the next federal transportation bill, which identifies seven legislative goals:

- Establish a clear direction for the nation's transportation investments.
- Establish a performance-driven investment strategy.
- Design programs to ensure progress in all parts of the country and across all components of the transportation system.
- Provide adequate flexibility to achieve both national and regional priorities.
- Improve federal funding program delivery mechanisms.
- Foster effective collaboration in decision making.
- Broaden the transportation funding base and funding amount.

The Congressional delegation is urged to consider these goals in supporting new transportation legislation.

▼ Rock Island Corridor Funding

The cities of Kansas City, Mo., Raytown, Lee's Summit, Greenwood, and Pleasant Hill, and Jackson and Cass counties have formed a Rock Island Corridor Coalition to secure the old Rock Island Railroad corridor from Leeds Junction in Kansas City to Pleasant Hill. The corridor has the potential for a multi-use trail, and would be the strategic connection for Kansas City to Missouri's Katy Trail. In addition, the corridor is part of the region's long-range transit plan as an important commuter corridor. The cost of acquisition of the corridor and its initial development for multi-use trail and transportation use is estimated at \$30 million. This project is of regional significance and of a very unique nature, given its dual transportation function. Local governments and private foundations would provide the required matching resources if federal funds could support up to 80 percent of the costs.

The Congressional delegation is urged to support funding for this project, which is of regional and statewide significance.

▼ Kansas City SmartPort/Trade Data Exchange

Congress has supported the region's efforts to establish an inland port and international trade processing capability known as Smart Port. Kansas City Smart Port is working with government and industry to develop the Kansas City region as a major transportation and distribution hub as well as an international Trade Data Exchange and provide supportive infrastructure and services for improved goods movement.

The Congressional delegation is urged to support funding for the continued development and implementation of SmartPort and the Trade Data Exchange.

▼ Appropriations for Transit

The MARC Board supports funding to enhance and sustain public transit services in the metro area. Each year, the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, Johnson County Transit and the Unified Government Transit work with MARC to identify capital and operating needs to further the implementation of the region's Smart Moves transit plan. A comprehensive transit system will ease growing traffic congestion, provide greater access to jobs and protect the region's air quality.

The Congressional delegation is urged to consider the identified capital and operating assistance requests for FY2011 and FY2012.

▼ Sustainable Communities Initiative

The federal government has focused support on enabling metropolitan regions across the nation to focus public infrastructure and private investment in ways that contribute to a more social, environmentally and economically sustainable future. MARC was recently awarded a \$4.25 million HUD Regional Sustainable Communities Planning grant, and will work with local governments, private businesses, nonprofits and other community partners over the next three years to implement provisions in the region's newly adopted Long-Range Transportation Plan and other elements of our regional Sustainable Development Plan.

MARC encourages the area's Congressional delegation to continue to support regional approaches to sustainable development, particularly those that result in cost-effective solutions designed through processes that engage broad community interests.

For more on MARC's position on transportation reauthorization, see Appendix A, pages 15–18.



Environmental Protection Agenda

▼ Support for Corps of Engineers' Funding for Flood Control/Environmental Projects

Flooding continues to be a top concern facing the bistate Kansas City community. A number of local communities have adopted new engineering standards, new stream-protection ordinances and best-management practices to reduce the threat of flooding and improve water quality and natural resource protection. However, local action alone will not solve the major water resource challenges facing the Kansas City area. MARC is working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase local involvement in federal efforts to address storm water management and environmental protection.

MARC supports continued FY2012 appropriations for important flood damage reduction studies and construction — for Blue River channel construction; Swope Park and Dodson Industrial Areas construction; Turkey Creek flood damage reduction construction; Kansas City Levees design and construction; Brush Creek Basin feasibility study; Upper Turkey Creek feasibility study; Little Blue River Basin study; Line Creek study; Kansas City, Mo., Critical Environmental Infrastructure; and Missouri River bed degradation feasibility study.

▼ Missouri River Bed Degradation

The Missouri River and the alluvium serve as the primary water source for many of the region's water suppliers. There is increasing concern over the degradation of the Missouri River bed, and the need for stabilization actions. MARC is working with local stakeholders and the Corps to begin the feasibility study in a phased approach. The first year appropriation for this project (FY2010) was \$556,000, and an FY2011 appropriation of \$600,000 is being considered by Congress.

MARC encourages the Congressional delegation to support continued appropriations for important flood control and ecosystem restoration projects in the Kansas City region.

MARC asks the Congressional delegation to support the FY2011 and FY2012 appropriations to enable the Corps to complete the first phase of this important study. MARC asks the Congressional delegation to consider an authorization in the Water Resources Conservation Act reauthorization for the second and third phases of the study to be fully federally funded, which will likely be part of the FY2013 funding request.

▼ Energy Conservation

Congress has authorized new programs and is considering additional actions to encourage greater energy conservation and efficiency. The Kansas City area's local officials are supportive of new approaches to reducing energy consumption, including alternative energy sources and alternative fuels. The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program was funded as part of the federal recovery act, and is providing local communities with important flexible dollars to address this crucial challenge.

The Congressional delegation is encouraged to support annual appropriations to local governments through the Energy Efficiency and Block Grant program to continue efforts in this important energy conservation area.

▼ Air Quality

The Kansas City region expects to be re-designated as a non-attainment area for ozone following action by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to finalize the ozone standard, designate air quality planning area boundaries and determine the extent of violations.

EPA is expected to finalize a new national ozone standard designed to better protect public health by mid-2011. The Kansas City area is expected to have several counties added to the region's air quality boundary. MARC's Air Quality Forum will work with Missouri and Kansas on new State Implementation Plans that outline measures to further emissions reductions. MARC continues to implement the region's Clean Air Action Plan, which outlines voluntary control measures.

Congress is asked to consider additional resources for states and urban areas to develop new air quality protection plans and programs. Further, the ability of urban areas across the nation to meet tougher standards will require a national strategy for reducing emissions. Finally, the tougher standards will result in many more affected areas and the planning timeframe proposed by EPA to develop implementation plans will need to be adjusted to consider the work ahead for states and communities.

Congress may consider ways for the nation to set goals and take actions to address carbon emissions. MARC supports enactment of a balanced, progressive and comprehensive approach to climate protection that encourages energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability, and that provides ongoing financial support to local governments in the implementation of that agenda.

MARC encourages Congress to consider allocating resources to local communities to design, implement and evaluate emission reduction measures.

▼ Green Infrastructure

Many local communities in the MARC region are working to improve water quality and protect natural resources through improvements to green infrastructure.


Congress is encouraged to continue support for water and wastewater system improvements for local communities, particularly as cities and counties work to address water quality and protect natural resources.



Human Services, Education and Health Care Agenda

▼ Early Learning Challenge Grant Fund


MARC supports the Early Learning Challenge Grant Fund proposal included in the Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act, HR 3221. This proposal is a key early childhood initiative designed to help expand young children's access to high-quality early learning opportunities, particularly disadvantaged children. The current proposed legislation invests \$1 billion a year for eight years for competitive grants to challenge states to work towards comprehensive, high quality early education systems for young children.



The area's Congressional delegation is urged to support HR 3221.

▼ The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)


CCDBG is the primary federal funding stream for child care and is the main federal grant program that provides money to each state for child care subsidies and to increase child care quality. For FY2010, this program was flat-funded at \$2.1 billion, the same level as FY2009. Through ARRA, CCDBG received a funding increase for the first time in seven years, amounting to \$2 billion for expansion and quality improvement.



MARC urges the Congressional delegation to support the reauthorization of CCDBG and a funding increase for the program.

▼ Head Start and Early Head Start

MARC is the grantee for Head Start and Early Head Start for the three Missouri counties of Jackson, Clay and Platte, serving 2,733 children. Head Start and Early Head Start provide comprehensive, high-quality early care and education and support services to vulnerable young children from birth to kindergarten, pregnant women and their families. Head Start received \$1 billion in ARRA funding and Early Head Start received \$1.1 billion for expansion allowing an additional 124,000 children to participate in the program nationally. The program also received \$235 million in increased funding for FY2009.



MARC encourages the area's Congressional delegation to support the continuation of expansion funding for Head Start and Early Head Start so that more young children can enroll in the program and so that children and their families do not fall off the ARRA funding cliff when the ARRA funds are finished.

The total annual amount that the House approved for FY2010 was \$7.2 billion for Head Start (in addition to the supplemental \$2.1 billion provided to Head Start and Early Head Start through the ARRA). The Senate also completed its full Committee mark up, approving the same \$7.2 billion annual appropriation as the House for Head Start programs. Early Head Start currently serves fewer than three percent of eligible children.

▼ Adequate Funding for Older Americans Act and Other Elderly Support Programs


MARC serves as the Area Agency on Aging for the five Missouri counties in the Kansas City region, and provides funding to meet the needs of many elderly residents.

▼ Health Care


MARC established a Regional Health Care Initiative in 2007 in response to community interest to improve care to underserved and uninsured residents. MARC has worked with the region's safety net providers and behavioral health providers to identify steps to better coordinate and expand care and needed services. Changes to coverage and rules for insurance plans will be challenging for those who are uninsured, the medically underserved and the safety net community that serves them. Special attention needs to be given to support for safety net clinics and access to quality medical care for this population.

▼ Increased Medicare Reimbursement Rates for Emergency Medical Services


Ambulance services in the Kansas City region (and throughout the nation) are challenged in providing services to Medicare patients, given the low reimbursement rates for transport and emergency care services. In the last session (S 1066 and HR 2443), Congress considered an extension of rates that have been in place and adjusted amounts to account for increased costs. Those offering urban services would receive a 6 percent increase and rural areas a 3 percent increase. These increases are in line with findings from the GAO report that analyzed ambulance service costs for Medicare patients. The two bills had support from the Kansas City area delegation, with Senator Roberts and Senator Bond serving as co-sponsors for S 1066.



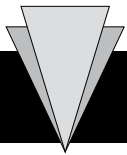
Congress is encouraged to appropriate adequate funds to meet the needs of growing elderly populations requiring Older American Act services, particularly as many of these citizens are being impacted by the nation's economic recession.



The Congressional delegation is urged to consider additional funding directed to safety net providers during the country's climb out of recession and transition to a reformed health care system.



MARC encourages adoption of increased Medicare reimbursement rates for ambulance services.



Public Safety and Homeland Security Agenda

▼ Homeland Security/Emergency Preparedness Funding

Congress has continued to authorize programs and appropriate funding for states and urban areas through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. MARC administers a number of grants on behalf of the region's local governments and agencies.

MARC encourages the Congressional delegation to consider a multi-year authorization for these programs to ensure that the federal government continues to provide support to states and urban areas.

▼ Public Safety Communications

The ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004 expired on Sept. 30, 2009. This law provided up to \$250 million annually for public safety agencies to upgrade their 9-1-1 systems. Even though \$250 million was authorized by the bill, the only year that funds were actually appropriated was 2009 for \$43.5 million. Through the state of Missouri, the MARC region received \$234,000.

The Congressional delegation is urged to support renewal of the ENHANCE 911 Act of 2004 and appropriations to support its implementation.

While the original intent of the grant was to enable 9-1-1 systems to receive wireless calls, it was amended to allow agencies to use the funds to migrate to Next Generation 911. As 9-1-1 callers ask for more ways to contact 9-1-1, such as texting and video, local public safety agencies will be challenged to find funding for the technology to meet those demands.

The FCC requirement for public safety agencies to achieve narrow banding of radio frequencies below 512 MHz by 2012 could severely impact local agencies' ability to communicate over public safety radio systems. Some agencies will be able to meet this requirement simply by reprogramming radios. Other agencies will be required to replace entire radio systems. In some cases this could mean additional radio towers due to changes in the coverage patterns of the narrow banded frequencies. The intent of the narrow banding is to provide additional radio channels, which are badly needed, and the agencies affected would welcome the new channels. But in many cases the agencies do not have the funding to meet this federal mandate. This is particularly true in areas that rely heavily on volunteers to staff fire departments and ambulance services. Those agencies are seeking assistance to meet the deadline.

The Congressional delegation is urged to work with local public safety agencies and MARC to either revise the FCC requirements or identify funding to meet the needs to ensure adequate public safety emergency communications.



Community Development Agenda

▼ Support for the Community Development Block Grant Program

Local governments in the Kansas City area, including Kansas City, Mo.; the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/ Kansas City, Kan.; Independence, Mo.; Johnson County, Kan.; Overland Park, Kan.; Olathe, Kan.; Lee's Summit, Mo.; Blue Springs, Mo.; and Leavenworth, Kan., use CDBG funds to assist low and moderate income residents and neighborhoods.

Congress is urged to maintain funding for this important and flexible community development program.

▼ Support for Reauthorization of the U.S. Economic Development Administration

MARC received designation by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District, allowing MARC to receive a modest annual planning grant. In addition, local agencies within the Kansas City region are able to use MARC's designation to be considered for planning and infrastructure grants from EDA. EDA is funded at modest levels, and reauthorization would ensure the continuation of this important effort.

Congress is encouraged to support reauthorization for the EDA.

▼ Support for Additional Resources to Address Mortgage Foreclosure Problems

Congress provided funding in 2008 and 2009 to assist local communities in addressing the impacts of the mortgage foreclosure crisis. While these funds are an important and significant resource to meeting the challenges facing urban communities and suburbs, additional resources are needed to fully address the impacts resulting from this national situation. A large number of homeowners will face new foreclosure challenges in 2011.

The Congressional delegation is urged to support continued funding to local communities to meet the mortgage foreclosure problems facing cities and suburbs.

▼ Support for Programs that Provide Access to Healthy Foods

Federal agencies are encouraging communities to take actions to increase access to healthy foods, particularly in neighborhoods where low incomes and inadequate access to transportation limit choices.

The area's Congressional delegation is urged to support legislation and appropriations for programs to help local governments and nonprofit organizations increase access to healthy foods for low-income and other disadvantaged populations.

Appendix A: Consensus Position on New Federal Transportation Authorization

Transportation plays a vital role in connecting the Kansas City region's people and businesses to goods, services and other opportunities. Many of the region's transportation services and facilities are supported by federal transportation funds. The current federal transportation authorization, SAFETEA-LU, expired in 2009 but has been continued by a series of Congressional extensions. Action is required by Congress to ensure that the nation's and the region's transportation needs will continue to be addressed. MARC has worked with the Kansas and Missouri departments of transportation, local transit agencies and area local governments to outline the Kansas City region's expectations for the next federal transportation authorization.

The next federal transportation authorization may serve as a transitional bill, bridging between the past approaches to investing in the nation's transportation infrastructure, and a new approach that focuses on a sustainable future for the country, ensuring that economic systems, environmental systems and social systems all are enhanced in ways that not only meet today's needs, but also preserve the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

National Vision and National Purpose

Legislative Goal: Establish a Clear Direction for the Nation's Transportation Investments

Our nation needs and deserves a world-class transportation system that promotes and achieves robust commerce and economic competitiveness, personal opportunity and social equity, energy security, global and local environmental protection, public health, national connectivity, national security, and effective emergency management and disaster response. This will require strategic investments in transportation systems and services that are effective and efficient, balanced across all modes, safe, reliable, maintained in a state of good repair and environmentally sound. Additionally, at this particular point in time, it is vital that the country invest in infrastructure that will stimulate the nation's economy while implementing well-planned products of lasting value.

Specifically, we need a clear and comprehensive plan that connects our country across all modes from border to border and coast to coast: a national highway system plan, a national passenger rail plan, a national freight/goods movement plan, a national passenger aviation plan, and a clear metropolitan strategy for the nodes where all of these systems interconnect. These plans cannot be identified in isolation, but must be developed to complement each other, as one singular national system with many components, to ensure we are using the most effective and efficient means to move people and goods across the country.

Performance Outcomes

Legislative Goal: Establish a Performance-Driven Investment Strategy

In order to accomplish this national vision, it will be necessary to define clear performance objectives, measure our progress against those objectives, and make appropriate adjustments in our investments. Some of these objectives should be tied to broad components of our national vision — greenhouse gas emission reductions, energy consumption, economic return and job creation, for example, while other objectives should be tied to the performance of the transportation system itself — traffic safety, congestion relief, availability of travel options or choices, maintenance of existing assets, etc.

Detailed performance measures should be developed at the state and regional level, in response to and in concert with the national objectives. These measures must look at the relationships across and between modes, such as:

- the relationship between the nation's passenger aviation system, and a national passenger rail network (some high speed);
- the relationship between urban transit systems and national passenger systems (both aviation and rail);
- the relationship between urban transit systems and congested urban roadway corridors;
- the relationship between freight rail corridors and parallel highway corridors with significant truck traffic;
- the relationship between freight rail corridors in urban centers and the need for urban passenger rail corridors; and
- the relationship between the design characteristics of our communities and the transportation options they support (i.e. walkable, bicycle-friendly, and transit-supportive).

Establishing a performance-driven investment strategy for the country will provide accountability to the public that their transportation dollars are actually accomplishing the things that they value and that are beneficial to them.

Programs

Legislative Goal: Design Programs to Ensure Progress in All Parts of the Country and Across All Components of the Transportation System

The design of the federal transportation programs should provide maximum flexibility to states and metropolitan regions to achieve the performance outcomes in support of the national objectives. However, within that flexibility, there should be some baseline assurances:

Midwest regions such as the Kansas City area, must be provided adequate resources to address their transportation challenges, even though they may currently have different degrees of congestion, transit utilization, and environmental impacts than other parts of the country; transit programs need to be assured of guaranteed amounts in order to conduct long term service and facility planning; and system expansion should not come at the expense of maintaining existing infrastructure.

Legislative Goal: Provide Adequate Flexibility to Achieve Both National and Regional Priorities

In the Kansas City region, the programs need to provide the flexibility to achieve the region's transportation priorities: maintaining and upgrading the existing transportation systems (all modes) to a state of good repair; increasing the choice of travel modes available, by significantly expanding investments in public transportation including programs for the disabled and elderly, as well as biking and walking facilities and programs; integrating transportation projects into the fabric of the community, taking into account environmental context, aesthetic and design context, and equal opportunity and social equity context; increasing the effectiveness of existing infrastructure and services (all modes) through technology deployment and operational strategies and supporting strategic decisions about when and where to expand the system; enhancing the region's role as a center of goods movement; and promoting safe travel across all transportation modes in the region – and doing all of this in a way that also accomplishes the region's goals around economic progress, environmental health and social wealth.

Legislative Goal: Improve Federal Funding Program Delivery Mechanisms

Federal funding programs should be streamlined and approval processes simplified for all programs. Federal oversight of tax dollars is important but federal agencies should administer federal programs with reasonableness and flexibility so as not to result in a significant burden on states and local communities. No new federal mandates should be issued affecting transportation without corresponding funding to support those mandates — the ADA paratransit service requirement is an example for the Kansas City region where a mandate was issued without additional funding to implement it. Finally, federal funding programs should be structured to maintain purchasing power while providing a predictable funding stream to foster better planning.

Decisions/Authority/Partnerships

Legislative Goal: Foster Effective Collaboration in Decision-Making

In a major metropolitan setting, such as the Kansas City region, the individual components of the transportation system are owned and operated by a variety of entities (state departments of transportation, cities and counties, toll authorities, transit agencies, private corporations, etc.). In order for the overall transportation system to perform most effectively and deliver the best mobility options for all citizens, each of the elements (highways, local roads, transit services, bike/pedestrian facilities, freight and passenger terminals, etc.) must work together. While the federal government should retain a strong role in funding transportation and setting broad national objectives, it should also support stronger collaborative relationships between all parties responsible for transportation in metropolitan areas, to encourage more shared decision making and more effective linkages between the elements of the transportation system while recognizing the needs and goals of cities and counties within the region. Metropolitan Planning Organizations should continue to serve as the place for metropolitan collaborative planning and decision making, facilitating efforts to address the complex, metropolitan transportation challenges facing our country.

And because many of our challenges, such as freight and intercity passenger movement, transcend individual state or metropolitan boundaries, the federal government should provide leadership and incentives to convene clusters of regions (so-called mega-regions), or convene groups of states to tackle multi-state corridors for freight and passenger movement. Examples of this in the Kansas City region include coordination with neighboring metropolitan planning organizations in St. Joseph and Lawrence, the Success in the Heartland initiative looking at connections between the Kansas City region and other neighboring major regions (Oklahoma City, Omaha, Des Moines, Minneapolis), I-29 and I-35 multi-state corridor coalition activities, and the Midwest Regional Rail initiative looking at a Midwest high speed rail network linking the Kansas City region to a number of other Midwest regions.

States should continue to have a strong role in planning and funding multi-modal state transportation networks in partnership with metropolitan regions and multi-state collaborations.

Another area of collaboration is between multiple disciplines. Efforts are underway in the Kansas City region to better integrate conservation/environmental planning and transportation planning, and to create stronger linkages between land use planning at the local level and transportation planning at the regional level. Federal transportation policy should encourage this linkage and integration, and view it as a means to streamline project development activities and expedite the time it takes to develop and approve projects, but in a way that strengthens the National Environmental Policy Act, rather than circumvents it.

Funding

Legislative Goal: Broaden Transportation Funding Base and Funding Amount

The nation's transportation needs are extensive, but similarly, there are great opportunities and benefits that transportation investments could generate. Because of that, it is vital that the country significantly increase its financial investment in transportation to restore and enhance the purchasing power of federal funding for transportation. It is also important that the nation have a long-term, dedicated, predictable and sustainable revenue stream to support transportation investment into the future.

The core of the nation's transportation funding should continue to be derived from transportation-related sources. In the Kansas City region, this approach is reflected in motor vehicle fuels taxes, automobile registration fees, other auto related fees and taxes, and tolls on selected facilities. These approaches should be continued in the near term, even as the country works to move to new models of transportation-related fees such as a vehicle miles travelled (VMT) tax, value pricing, indexing of existing fuel taxes, and ton-mile taxes on freight.

This foundation of transportation-related sources should be supplemented by additional resources from environmental legislation (i.e. cap and trade systems/carbon taxes) to reduce transportation's contribution to green house gas emissions, and should be further supplemented with new transportation resources to foster innovative, environmentally sound transportation initiatives and stimulate the economy. Additionally, as transportation investments are increasingly viewed as tools to help address economic stimulus, energy security, environmental protection and social equity, it is reasonable to direct general fund revenues to transportation projects and services to support this broader mission.

Federal funding should continue to require local commitments and local match, but percentages of that match should be equalized across modal programs. Today, federal aviation programs are funded at 90 percent federal/10 percent match; highway programs are 80 percent/20 percent; funding for major transit facilities (New Starts) is so competitive that most recent projects are 50 percent/50 percent; and federal funds available for local road systems are so limited that often local governments significantly overmatch them to have sufficient funds to complete meaningful projects. Federal matching percentages should be equalized across programs, particularly ensuring that transit projects receive 80 percent federal funding commensurate with highway projects, but programs should still retain flexibility for state and local project sponsors to overmatch, when appropriate, to complete priority projects.

The federal authorization should also provide maximum flexibility to local governments, states and regions to implement their own additional funding mechanisms to complement federal transportation investment and ensure adequate resources are available to meet the region's and the nation's transportation needs.

The MARC Board urges Congress to enact a new multi-year federal transportation authorization that will establish a new transportation vision for our country, ensure our transportation investments achieve both broad national and regional objectives as well as improved transportation performance, support collaborative partnerships between federal, state, regional and local governments and agencies, and provide substantial funding to ensure our critical national and regional transportation needs are met.

Appendix B: The MARC Board of Directors

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Marge Vogt, First Vice-Chair
Jan Marcason, Second Vice-Chair
Kathy Dusenbery, Secretary
C. Edward Peterson, Treasurer

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Alternate: Mayor Jimmy Odom, Belton
Mayor Juan Alonzo, Raymore
Alternate: Mayor Terry Wilson, Pleasant Hill

Clay County, Missouri

Presiding Commissioner Pam Mason
Alternate: Commissioner Katee Porter
Commissioner Larry Larson
Alternate: Commissioner Katee Porter
Mayor Greg Canuteson, Liberty
Alternate: Mayor Bill Biggerstaff, North Kansas City

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County Executive Mike Sanders
County Legislator Scott Burnett
Mayor David Bower, Raytown
Alternate: Mayor Carson Ross, Blue Springs

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Commissioner Jim Plunkett
Alternate: Commissioner Kathy Dusenbery

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Commissioner C. Edward Peterson
Mayor Ronald L. Shaffer, Prairie Village
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Alternate: Mayor David Anderson, De Soto

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Commission Chair John Flower
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Unified Government of Wyandotte County/ Kansas City, Kansas

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Alternate: Mayor John McTaggart, Edwardsville

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Councilmember Jim Schultz

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Alternate: Councilmember Ed Ford
Councilmember Jan Marcason
Councilmember Cathy Jolly

Lee's Summit, Missouri

Mayor Randy Rhoads
Alternate: Councilmember Ed Cockrell

Overland Park, Kansas

Mayor Carl Gerlach
Alternate: Councilmember Donna Owens
Councilman Curt Skoog

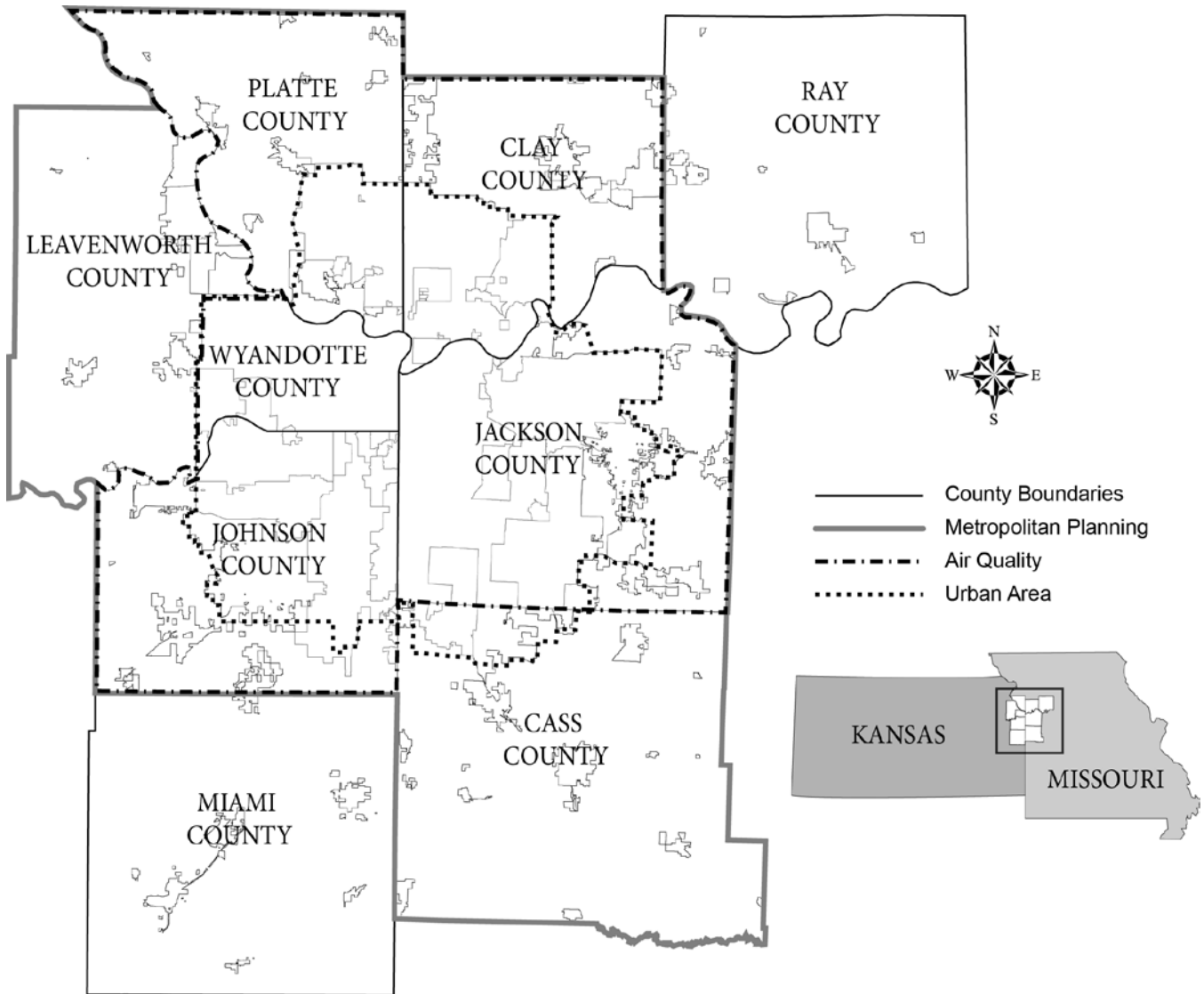
Olathe, Kansas

Mayor Michael Copeland
Alternate: Councilmember Marge Vogt

Miami County, Kansas

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Alternate: Commissioner George Pretz

Appendix C: The MARC Region and MPO Boundary Map





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