Each year, the MARC Board of Directors adopts federal and state legislative platforms based on issues of importance to the Kansas City region. Priorities for the 2017 session of the Missouri General Assembly are outlined below.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FLEXIBILITY**

Effective local government is built on the longstanding principle of home rule that is embedded in many statutory provisions, which enables cities and counties to legislate and determine local affairs. While state and federal governments have an obligation to encourage and assist sound municipal and county management, many state and federal statutory, budgetary and regulatory actions limit the ability of local leaders to make decisions. They often impose financial burdens and impede the ability of local communities to govern themselves. ★ *The MARC Board urges the Missouri General Assembly to consider the impacts of state statutes and budget decisions on local governments, to avoid unfunded requirements, and to support the principle of flexible home rule to maximize opportunities for local self-determination.*

**TRANSPORTATION**

**Transportation Revenues**

Insufficient revenues at the state level will require continued attention to transportation funding by the Missouri General Assembly. State legislators are urged to protect the integrity of current state funding and to work to identify new resources to address highway, major roadway and bridge infrastructure, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian and aviation needs in the state and the Kansas City metro area. The Missouri Department of Transportation has been working with regional agencies, local communities, transit providers and other partners through the “On the Move” planning process to identify long-range transportation needs in Missouri. ★ *MARC supports increased funding for statewide, multi-modal transportation priorities in Missouri. MARC recommends that transportation funding options considered include user-based fees and taxes and not be limited to retail sales taxes.*

In 2016, the General Assembly activated a new, multi-modal Missouri Moves Cost Share program and the Missouri Department of Transportation issued a call for applications, to which there was a tremendous response. ★ *MARC supports the continuation of the Cost Share program in future years.*
Amtrak
★ State legislators are urged to support funding to maintain and expand passenger rail services (Amtrak) in Missouri. The State of Missouri currently supports the Missouri River Runner Amtrak service between Kansas City and St. Louis. Ridership on Missouri River Runner declined in FY 2016, with a total of 172,032 passengers as compared to 185,591 passengers in FY 2015. This decrease in ridership is primarily due to low gas prices and recurrent bus bridges due to construction on the high-speed rail corridor between St. Louis and Chicago.

Transportation Safety
Texting Ban for All Ages
★ Broaden state restrictions on texting while driving to apply to drivers of all ages. Distracted driving is a serious threat to personal and public safety on our public highways. According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) research, 3,328 people were killed and an estimated 421,000 were injured in distraction-related crashes in 2012. Thirty-nine states now have bans on text messaging for all drivers. In 2009, the Missouri General Assembly enacted a law banning texting while driving for drivers 21 years old and younger. Texting while driving is a serious distraction regardless of the age of the driver. Between one-fourth and one-fifth of all traffic fatalities involved distracted drivers in the Greater Kansas City area.

Primary Seatbelt Law
★ Support passage of a primary seat belt law. Seven out of 10 Missourians killed in a traffic crash are unbuckled. Seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent. Missouri’s current seat belt law (307.178 RSMo) is a secondary law, which means that law enforcement officers cannot pull over vehicles solely for a seat belt violation. Missouri’s 2012 overall seat belt usage rate was 79 percent, compared to 86 percent nationwide. National data demonstrates that seat belt use continues to be higher in the states with primary laws. The current law restricts law enforcement’s ability to protect the traveling public and sends the wrong message to the public.

Cell Phone Ban for Young Drivers
★ Enact provisions that restrict cell phone use for young drivers who lack driving experience under the graduated drivers’ licenses (GDL). The current GDL does restrict text messaging but not cell phone use. Thirty-two states have GDL laws that ban cell phone use.

Motorcycle Helmet Law
★ Maintain current state law requiring motorcycle helmet use. The universal motorcycle helmet law that was enacted by the General Assembly in 1967 has saved hundreds of Missouri lives. Based on studies of the effects of other states’ enactment, repeal or weakening of universal helmet laws, use approached 100 percent when all motorcyclists were required to wear helmets, compared with about 50 percent when there was no helmet law or a law applying only to some riders. In states that either reinstated or enacted universal motorcycle helmet laws, helmet use increased dramatically, and motorcyclist deaths and injuries decreased. In states that repealed or weakened their universal helmet laws, helmet use declined sharply, and motorcyclist deaths and injuries rose.
Transit Operator Safety
Transit operators, including the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, are increasingly concerned about violence on public transit facilities. ★ Support legislation that strengthens protections for transit operators from workplace violence.

Aviation
Disposal of Abandoned Aircraft
Current State law in Missouri prohibits airports and their sponsoring agencies from removing aircraft that are abandoned on airport property. Over time, abandoned aircraft begin to deteriorate, creating health hazards and visual blight on airport grounds. Furthermore, abandoned aircraft occupy limited storage space that in many cases provides a critical revenue source for airports. ★ MARC supports the passage of legislation in Missouri that allows airports to remove abandoned aircraft from airport property.

ENVIRONMENT

Solid Waste and Recycling
The Mid-America Regional Council Solid Waste Management District has worked to reduce waste going to area landfills for over 20 years. There are 20 districts in Missouri, including the MARC Solid Waste Management District which serves the five Missouri counties in the Kansas City region. These districts encourage waste reduction, waste diversion and recycling through public education and programs and grants to improve the infrastructure for waste diversion and recycling. Of the $2.11/ton landfill tipping fee that supports solid waste management in the state of Missouri, $1.28/ton is authorized for the districts’ operations and the remainder is used for state program operations and management.

The MARC SWMD encourages the Joint Committee and the General Assembly to continue to support the districts to make effective decisions through local decision making authority, to set rules that foster efficient district management and operations, and to maintain the tipping fee to landfills as an adequate source of funding for the state’s solid waste management program and the regional solid waste districts.
★ State legislators are urged to continue support for solid waste management districts throughout the state of Missouri in order to protect local government rights to develop and implement local and regional integrated solid waste management systems and strategies, including waste disposal and materials diversion facilities and services, which are designed to protect human health and the environment and to maximize waste reduction and diversion.

★ State legislators are urged to reduce or eliminate the two-year notice statute governing how local governments inform private haulers of their intention to provide solid waste services. The scope of this statute now extends well beyond the original intent to provide proper notice when jurisdictions annex new areas served by private residential haulers. As local governments evaluate measures to increase the efficiency of solid waste management and recycling and reduce the impact of hauling operations on local infrastructure, the current law restricts local authority to provide for quality and affordable services to residents in a timely manner.

Energy Conservation
Energy conservation is important to the region’s economy and quality of life. A consensus position prepared with the Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce encourages investments in energy reliability and efficiency, balancing long-term public health and environmental protections with
economic growth. ★ MARC encourages policies that include use of renewable energy for transportation and residential and non-residential services, such as solar power; green infrastructure; and PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy).

EARLY LEARNING

MARC, through its Metropolitan Council on Early Learning (MCEL), supports public policies and investments that will increase access to high quality early learning programs for Missouri’s children and families. High-quality early care and education helps give children the boost they need to succeed in school, provides parents with the support and peace of mind they need to be productive at work, and strengthens our economy in the short and long term. Funding quality early childhood programs is a good investment — research shows that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, the state saves at least $7 down the road. Those savings come from such outcomes as fewer criminals in the justice system, fewer adults on public assistance, fewer teen pregnancies and a stronger workforce. MARC, in partnership with other organizations, supports the following public policies and investments that will increase access to high quality early learning programs for Missouri children and families.

Child Care Program Health and Safety
★ Support efforts to strengthen health and safety standards for unlicensed child care providers. Missouri currently has some of the most lenient laws in the nation regarding in-home family child care programs. Under Missouri law, in-home day care providers can operate without a license with up to four children in their care who are not related to the provider, and no limit on the number of related children. This allows many home day care providers to remain unlicensed even though they are watching far more than four children. Each year, dozens of children in Missouri are injured or in some cases die in unregulated in-home settings due to a lack of adequate supervision. Eliminating the related-child exemption for younger children would make these environments safer for Missouri’s youngest children and more closely align Missouri with the majority of states nationwide and with neighboring states. Kansas and Oklahoma require every child to be counted, while Illinois allows just one related child to be exempt from the count.

Child Care Subsidies
★ Support efforts to increase the income eligibility rate for families who qualify for child care subsidies from the current 150 percent up to 185 percent of the federal poverty level. Support efforts to increase the child care reimbursement rate for child care subsidies up to 75 percent of the current market rate. Child care subsidies are essential for allowing low-income families to enter and remain in the workforce. Nationwide, the average income eligibility for child care is 180 percent of the federal poverty level. Although Missouri has made strides to increase income eligibility in recent years, there is still room for improvement. In addition, subsidy reimbursement rates for providers in many regions of the state are still below 75 percent of the actual market rates for child care. These lower rates make it difficult for providers to serve subsidy-eligible children, and make it nearly impossible for many low-income families to access quality child care programs for their children.

Universal Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten
★ Support legislation that will allow public school districts and charter schools to contract with community-based child care providers for pre-K services through the funding formulary. During the 2014 legislative session the Missouri General Assembly passed HB1689, which provides pre-kindergarten state funding to districts and charter schools for children ages 3 and 4 who are eligible for free/reduced
lunch. Funding is capped at 4 percent of the district and charter school’s total number of pupils who are eligible for free/reduced lunch. Unaccredited schools will receive funding during the 2015/2016 school year, while provisionally accredited districts will receive funding during the 2016/2017 school year. All other district funding is contingent upon full funding of the foundation formula. Allowing school districts and charter schools to contract with community-based providers for pre-K services will allow those providers to continue to provide preschool services that help offset the higher cost to provide infant and toddler care. Many communities across the state currently experience a shortage of infant and toddler care options.

Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

Support efforts to fund the development and implementation of an Early Childhood Program Quality Performance Report pilot program. As part of SB638, the ban on quality rating systems was repealed, allowing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop a three-year pilot program. Establishing quality indicators will help ensure that Missouri children have access to high-quality early learning programs that will prepare them to learn and improve their success in school and in life. In addition, linking quality indicators to increased rates of child care subsidies will help Missouri child care providers offset the added costs of providing quality early learning programs. Missouri has developed similar systems to rate nursing homes in the state, and Missouri families deserve to have the best information available to them as they search for the learning environments for their children.

9-1-1 FUNDING

Efforts have been underway for a number of years to enable voters to broaden the scope of communication devices for which users are levied a fee to support 9-1-1, and to revise state 9-1-1 statutes to allow for a county fee on all communication devices, including landline, wireless and VOIP devices to support emergency telephone 9-1-1 costs. The legislation that advanced in the last session (HB1904) would have created a statewide fee for pre-paid wireless devices to support small communities and rural areas in particular those areas that do not have Enhanced 9-1-1 (E-9-1-1) by upgrading their 9-1-1 systems to accommodate and locate wireless calls for emergency services. A portion of the pre-paid device fee will be returned to the county where the fee is generated. The Kansas City regional 9-1-1 system offers high quality services to area residents, businesses and visitors. The Kansas City regional system handles nearly two million 9-1-1 calls annually and an additional two million non-emergency calls through 42 public safety answering points. The region’s counties recognize the critical importance of this system and have invested in improvements to receive and process all 9-1-1 calls, including those from wireless devices.

Three-fourths of all 9-1-1 calls received in the Kansas City region come from wireless devices. National industry experts estimate that over 40 percent of all households rely exclusively on wireless communications devices and do not have a landline phone in their homes. The FCC estimates that only 6 percent of all homes will have landline phones by 2018. Missouri wireless customers do not contribute to the cost of 9-1-1 operations, and Missouri is the only state in the nation that has not enacted a surcharge to support wireless 9-1-1. The region’s high quality 9-1-1 system is threatened as the financial resources supporting its maintenance and operation are declining. ★ The General Assembly is urged to support legislation to enable counties to ask voters to approve a 9-1-1 fee on all communications devices to support emergency 9-1-1 costs. The legislators are also asked to support legislation that
would allow for a statewide fee on pre-paid wireless devices to provide resources for small communities to enhance their 9-1-1 systems.

**HIGHER EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

★ Support maintenance of state funding for higher education, recognizing the importance of post-secondary attainment by area residents to meet the needs for business growth. Budget cuts to higher education have required reductions in programs and services and increases in tuition and fees. KC Rising and other regional workforce and economic development initiatives have documented the importance of increasing post-secondary attainment, which requires affordable higher education.

★ Enable high school students to gain college credit at any of the public and not-for-profit institutions in the Kansas City area that offer the programming to support their career interests. High school students are able to take college courses during their senior high school year and attain college credit. Increasing the number of higher education institutions to include all public and not-for-profit schools in the Kansas City region would enable students to select the classes that could help them pursue their career goals.

**FUNDING FOR OLDER ADULT SERVICES**

The General Assembly appropriates state funds to supplement federal funds to meet the growing needs of elderly residents of the state. These state and federal funds are administered by Area Agencies on Aging, including one operated by the Mid-America Regional Council. Funding reductions have resulted in cutbacks in services to the growing number of older adults throughout the state and in the Kansas City area, including home delivered meals to home bound and frail elderly. Changes in Medicaid and Medicare with federal health care reform will result in the need for increased information services for many of the state’s senior adults. ★ State legislators are urged to support maintaining or restore lost funding for Area Agencies on Aging for home delivered meals and to provide enhanced information and care coordination and other direct services at existing or increased levels. In addition, state legislators are urged to support funding for the Area Agencies on Aging in Missouri to provide “benefits” counseling to assist seniors in understanding the changes in Medicare and Medicaid, and to access services for which they may be eligible.

The Missouri Silver Haired Legislature and the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging have voiced support for a new fee on Medicare insurance policies purchased through insurance brokers. The fee would be allocated to Area Agencies on Aging to support services for vulnerable older adults. This proposal is being discussed by statewide and regional organizations to determine whether Kansas City regional support is appropriate.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

★ Support legislation authorizing an Interstate Compact with the state of Kansas for EMS agencies to more easily cross the state line for mutual aid, disaster response and daily patient transports. This authorization would make patient transports easier in clarifying adherence to home state rules on medications and procedures.

★ Support legislation that allows for Crisis Intervention Training for EMS personnel to be equipped to work with behavioral health patients. Support legislation that gives authority and limits liability of EMS agencies in treating and transporting special needs patients and standardize how EMS personnel
would serve these patients. EMS providers need to be able to place behavioral patients under hold to transport them safely to services. The ability to transport patients unable to give their consent, and to have the necessary training to allow for safety for the EMS personnel and the patient is important.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Support for Expansion of Health Care Services
Recent data shows that there are almost 250,000 residents in the Kansas City region without health care insurance, including 140,000 in the region’s five Missouri counties. There are a number of additional residents with limited coverage, including high deductibles that limit health care access. Under the Affordable Care Act, states are able to work with the federal government to expand and reform Medicaid so that more families and individuals that are currently uninsured may secure coverage. The expansion of health care coverage would allow these residents to access more appropriate health care to meet their needs, rather than expensive hospital emergency room visits. The ability of low-income Missouri residents to access non-emergency room health care supports better use of the entire health care system and reduces the risk for those without coverage from experiencing more serious health problems due to lack of early treatment. ★ The MARC Board encourages the General Assembly to support expansion and reform of Medicaid to increase health care coverage for the region’s most vulnerable populations and reduces the costs of uncompensated emergency care to hospitals and safety net providers.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (Registry for Opioids)
★ Support the creation of a statewide prescription registry for opioids. The growing number of overdoses and deaths from opioids and heroin is of increasing concern to communities across the state of Missouri, urban, suburban and rural. Most states across the nation have allowed for the establishment of a Prescription Registry to allow physicians to determine the frequency and recent status of opioid (pain medication) prescribed to patients before prescribing additional medicine. Research has shown that opioids are highly addictive, and due to their high cost, often lead those addicted to use heroin. Emergency room visits for overdoses from heroin or opioids in the Kansas City area (five Missouri counties) has increased from 56 per year in 2008 and 2009 to 254 cases in 2015. Legislation was introduced in 2016 to create a Missouri registry but did not survive the legislative session.