

# Sustainable Growth for Small Cities



A Tool Kit  
for Local Government

# Creating Quality Places - Successful Small Cities

## Technical Tool Kit

The Kansas City metropolitan area continues to grow, and despite intentions to promote contiguous, compact growth within the region, many of the smaller, fringe communities surrounding Kansas City are beginning to see the same sprawling development patterns that Kansas City experienced over the last 25 years. At the same time, many smaller communities may be in a better position to change development patterns and fend off undesirable environmental, economic, and social costs that such low density growth produces.

The Successful Small Cities initiative, an extension of the Mid-America Regional Council Creating Quality Places project, brought citizens of three small, metropolitan area communities together to define desirable community development practices applicable to the opportunities and issues faced by smaller jurisdictions. The goals of the program are to: provide an opportunity to involve and inform local residents and community leaders, to build public advocacy for alternatives to conventional development in small cities, and recommend implementation tools that could result in real changes in the way small communities embrace and respond to development pressures.

With funding support from the US EPA, the Mid-America Regional Council sought applications from communities to receive technical assistance covering four aspects of development: environment, land use, transportation, and housing with an emphasis on the physical environment. The assistance was delivered through public workshops hosted by the small city. MARC selected the cities of Harrisonville and Weston, Missouri, and Spring Hill Kansas.

Each of the three cities articulated a specific challenge they faced. For Harrisonville, the issues of traffic safety, conflicts between pedestrians and motor vehicles, and traffic congestion were identified as serious problems. Harrisonville wanted technical assistance in transportation planning and access management. Spring Hill is experiencing development pressures resulting from the construction of a new golf course. Interest in development surrounding the course has increased pressure to extend municipal infrastructure and services. Weston chose to focus on promoting affordable housing and on retaining neighborhoods with a variety of housing styles, types and price ranges.

This Technical Tool Kit is a follow-up to the workshops and provides resources on successful development practices for broader application in small cities throughout the MARC service area. The manual presents city staff and public officials with broad principles upon which to base comprehensive plans and land development regulations, benchmarks against which to judge development proposals, resource lists of ordinances developed in small communities across the country and a catalogue of funding sources for planning initiatives.