

## **SUSTAINABLE PLACES POLICY COMMITTEE**

### **November 3, 2023 Meeting Summary**

#### **Committee Members**

Mayor Dean Katerndahl, City of Parkville, MO Co-chair  
Councilmember Logan Heley, City of Overland Park, KS Co-chair  
Brian Alferman, Burns & McDonnell  
Jon Birkel, Hunt Midwest  
Janet McRae, Miami County, KS  
Erin Ollig, City of Overland Park, KS  
Michael Park, Lee's Summit, MO  
Melissa Schmitz, MoDOT  
Allison Smith, KDOT  
Commissioner Scott Wagner, Clay County, MO  
Maddie Waldeck, Basehor, KS

#### **Guests**

Krystal Jolly, MoDOT  
Gerald (Bo) Williams, Kansas City, MO  
Juan Yin, MoDOT

#### **MARC Staff Present**

Beth Dawson, Josh Akers, Megan Broll, Taylor Cunningham, Darryl Fields, Tom Jacobs, Frank Lenk, Kiley Meierarend, Emily Miller, Martin Rivarola

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Kansas Co-chair Councilmember Logan Heley called the meeting to order. Introductions in-person and online followed. Gerald Williams noted he was attending on behalf of Jeff Williams.

#### **Approval of September 8, 2023 Meeting Summary\***

Co-Chair Heley called for any additions or corrections to the meeting summary draft; none were suggested. Mayor Dean Katerndahl motioned to accept the meeting summary, Erin Ollig seconded the motion. The motion passed and the meeting summary was approved.

#### **Regional Housing Partnership**

Josh Akers, Research Manager with MARC, presented on spatial mismatch, which describes the relationship between jobs and affordable housing locations. Transportation costs are a necessary expense for most households, and Mr. Akers shared data on the average cost to own a car commute times. Two major job centers in the region are surrounded by sprawling housing supply, forcing residents to choose between commute times, housing costs, neighborhood amenities, etc. Low-wage workers travel farther distances and spend a larger percent of their income on transportation. Mr. Akers discussed the disparity between low-income households and low-wage jobs, and noted an approach to affordability in the region would need to account for the cost of housing, the necessity and cost of transportation, and increasing incomes. Mr. Akers noted MARC staff were available to share this presentation with city councils or other interested groups, and the presentation could be tailored to the audience.

The committee discussed benefits resulting from available housing and access to transportation services, and different approaches to demonstrating economic benefits to policy makers. Janet McRae noted how the commute is prohibitive for southern counties in the region, and they could produce more if labor was more available. The committee also discussed the effects of housing density, keeping employees local, and perceptions of the general public.

### **Connected KC 2050 Update**

Martin Rivarola, MARC Assistant Director of Transportation & Land Use, briefed the committee on the regional transportation plan (Connected KC 2050) update, noting what has been accomplished so far and plans for next steps. Mr. Rivarola described policy goals and strategies, and reviewed the forecast originally established for the plan, which includes expected changes to demographics such as population, employment, and transportation usage. Mr. Rivarola reviewed the objectives of the plan update, focusing on funding strategies and increasing buy in with stakeholders across the region. He also reviewed things that have changed since the plan was adopted (such as population growth and travel patterns), and noted that transit improvements have seen little progress.

The current phase of the two year update process includes project identification and scenario planning, as well as hosting public outreach and engagement events and surveys throughout the end of the year. The call for projects for sponsors to update existing projects or add new ones is currently open until December 8, and project scoring and prioritization will continue into spring of next year.

Frank Lenk, Director of Research Services, discussed potential scenarios for different growth patterns and how that would impact land use. While these scenarios aren't intended to serve as predictions, they can help illustrate how resilient the region is in achieving the policy goals under extreme conditions. Three main factors that can affect the transportation system include what is built (such as highway-focused or multi-modal facilities), how much/how quickly the region will grow, and how it grows (focused versus dispersed). Mr. Lenk noted the region is already expected to grow more slowly compared to the original transportation plan, and that the region is gradually moving from more dispersed growth to more compact growth.

Mr. Lenk presented possible scenarios based on growth patterns, and potential impacts on the transportation system. Generating these metrics can help us understand what kinds of policies and investments could make the region more resilient to future stresses. Interesting results demonstrate that rapid and focused growth may have fewer vehicle miles traveled than slower growth that is more dispersed, which suggests that more compact growth would have a strong benefit to saving both on infrastructure and greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Lenk discussed how density was defined inside and outside of urban areas, as well as average costs of infrastructure per square mile; these figures helped demonstrate relative cost differences for focused and dispersed growth in different scenarios. Considering multiple scenarios, research shows that the best investments center around focused growth with heavy multimodal investments.

The committee discussed how density was defined in relation to lane miles and costs of properties, as well as how density is evaluated along transit corridors. Members also commented

on the importance of messaging and political/public support; anticipating consumer preferences, making the data accessible to individuals (versus region-wide cost comparisons), and how focused growth is defined (downtown core versus across existing communities). Mr. Lenk clarified that focused growth did apply to existing activity centers, even for smaller communities. The committee also questioned if the assumptions for infrastructure costs were adequate and sustainable levels of funding, and if they included factors such as backlogs or state contributions.

### **Freight Study- Land Use Aspects**

Darryl Fields, MARC Principal Planner, briefed the committee on the new freight study for the region; the last study was conducted in 2005. This study will include all MARC counties, Douglas County, and four counties in the Pioneer Trails Regional Planning Commission. CDM Smith will be conducting the study and focusing on four areas:

1. Looking at the regional transportation picture (urban and rural) across the fourteen selected counties
2. Strengthening the Goods Movement Committee and their participation in statewide freight planning and regional growth
3. Looking at the nexus between transportation, freight movement, economic development, and land use
4. Drafting a planning workbook that planners and city councils can use to understand what freight will look like in the future and how we can better address freight movement.

Mr. Fields confirmed freight includes air, truck, rail, and water. Co-Chair Heley expressed interest in the overlap between existing freight lines and commuter rail service, and the potential for commuter usage. Mr. Fields answered this study would allow data to examine current usage rates and what would be available in the future, but that system updates would be requested by rail providers before transitioning to commuter use. The length of the study is eighteen months.

### **Climate Call for Projects**

Tom Jacobs, Chief Resilience Officer and Environmental Programs Director of MARC, presented information about the request for projects that is currently open to select projects to support a collaborative regional Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grant to the EPA next Spring. Mr. Jacobs believes our region would be competitive to receive between \$200m-\$250m in grant funding. Our climate plan describes activities in six different sectors; energy generation, building energy efficiency, transportation, food systems, natural ecosystem restoration, and resource management. An online project portal was shared with committee members, and Mr. Jacobs offered to meet with members/jurisdictions individually as needed. Mr. Jacobs noted a draft slate of projects would be available by January, with anticipated adoption by the MARC Board to follow in February. Co-Chair Heley clarified that the application from MARC would include multiple projects across the region (versus MARC promoting a single coordinated project); Mr. Jacobs confirmed that MARC would work toward developing a cohesive narrative between the multiple projects, paying attention to the EPA criteria and leveraging federal funding to maximize the competitiveness of the application.

### **Activity Center Status Update**

Martin Rivarola shared the Activity Center Map (available on the MARC website at <https://marc-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=948661000b344dd2a1456f3f4f7d19b8>), which includes refreshed data and helps identify areas of intensity at a parcel level across the region.

The resource was shared across the region and opened for feedback, MARC is currently reviewing those comments and questions. The goal is to have a completed, updated map for the release of the suballocated call for projects at the end of February/beginning of March in 2024. This map will help in scoring of projects and other MARC processes. MARC staff clarified that this applies only to existing activity centers (and does not include plans for future land use), but that similar resources about land use may be available as MARC works to update forecast data.

### **Committee discussion regarding 2024 work plan priorities**

MARC Principal Planner Beth Dawson shared that the January SPPC meeting will be discussing PSP scoring criteria, and if the data-driven approach of scoring piloted in the last round of PSP projects will work better than the traditional narrative-based questions. Ms. Dawson asked for interested members to join a work group to evaluate application formats, noting the number of questions may be reduced in a data-driven setup.

Ms. Dawson also noted the need for guiding documents for the committee, such as bylaws and membership requirements. She proposed drafting and discussing a document in January, with adoption to take place at the January or March committee meeting. Ms. Dawson noted the benefit of having a guiding document that defined the role of the SPPC with housing and land use policy items, particularly in relation to the Regional Housing Partnership. Ms. Dawson also plans to interview committee members to assess and discuss goals of the committee. Co-Chair Katerndahl noted the guiding document could include priority issues of the committee, as well as recurring schedules. Frank Lenk noted the MARC Board last adopted a Land Use Policy in 2008. Tom Jacobs also noted that this committee was established with the intention of advancing policies to the MARC Board.

Toward the end of January, the Regional Housing Partnership will know if they have secured a HUD grant, so Ms. Dawson recommended postponing the next SPPC meeting.

### **Other Business**

Co-Chair Heley noted the next committee would likely be postponed to the end of January, and reviewed the upcoming agenda items.

Erin Ollig shared that the PSP 79<sup>th</sup> Street Corridor Plan project will have its first open house next Wednesday, November 8.

Seeing no further comments, Co-Chair Heley adjourned the meeting.