SUSTAINABLE PLACES POLICY COMMITTEE
May 11, 2018 Meeting Summary

Those Present
Commissioner Jim Walters, Unified Government, Co-Chair
Mary Cyr, Mattie Rhodes Center
Jon Birkel, Hunt-Midwest
Kelly Drake-Woodward, city of Gardner
Michael Kelley, BikeWalkKC
Allison Smith, KDOT
Eva Steinman, MODOT
Hephzibah Dutt, Westside Housing Organization
Mark O’Hara, HOK S+V+E
Kristin Riott, Bridging the Gap
Tom Jacobs, Ron Achelpohl, Frank Lenk, Marlene Nagel, Marc Hansen, Beth Dawson – MARC staff

Welcome and Introductions - Commissioner Jim Walters welcomed those present and asked for self-introductions.

Approval of March 9, 2018 Meeting summary – Kristin Riott made a motion, seconded by Mark O’Hara, to approve the March 9 meeting summary. The motion carried.

Transit-Oriented Development EIS - Beth Dawson gave a report on this study. The study evaluated the impact of development resulting from transit investments along fast and frequent corridors, including Troost and Main. The study also looked at other transit corridors/investments. Partners in the study included MARC, KCATA, cities of Kansas City and Independence, Johnson County, and Unified Government. The study looked at economic potential, existing conditions, public perceptions, impacts for similar transit projects in 11 peer cities, analyzed transit service and identified possible future transit service. The dominant discoveries made by the study include: the region has “good bones” due to our existing urban form that had previously supported streetcars; the small investment in the MAX corridors provided strong returns; and more could be done to leverage the power of MAX service. The transit investments have made a positive impact, and for the analysis, 13 study areas were examined. For the Kansas City corridors, there is a transit typology based on the combination of four elements: number and density of people and jobs, market strength for transit service and for development opportunities. A public survey elicited 570 responses, with 75 percent from zip codes around the transit services. Two-thirds of respondents saw a positive impact from the MAX service and station improvements, including the improved look and feel for transit services. Safety was identified as second most important benefit by transit riders. The study also looked at appraised value of surrounding properties. The analysis used the Envision Tomorrow scenario model, which projected housing density and employment density necessary to support a transit station location. The Main Street corridor showed the greatest opportunities given existing and possible future densities. The study showed that for every dollar of transit investment, it would result in $245 of private development investment. Three study findings: (1) fast and frequent service corridors have more stable surrounding properties and are more recession proof; (2) fast and frequent service or zoning changes are driving private investment in these corridors; and (3) properties around fast and frequent transit corridors appreciate more than in other submarkets. Three recommendations: (1) highlight market success of these corridors; (2) use the study to make a regional business case for Transit Oriented Development and provide zoning ordinance templates; and (3) build regional capacity for transit analysis. Committee members asked about housing investment and opportunities for affordable housing along the transit corridors. There is a need to develop a strategy for affordable housing along the transit corridors given the appreciation of property values as transit investments are planned.

Sub-allocated Federal Funds Call for Projects – Planning committee advisory role - Ron Achelpohl gave a report. Every two years, MARC programs federal transportation dollars. MARC is working with local officials to consider projects for FY21 and 22 funds in three categories – CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation Air Quality), TAP (Transportation Alternatives Program) and STP (Surface Transportation Program) Funds are allocated separately for MO and KS. For MO STP, $10 million for each of two funding cycles was already approved for the new Buck O’Neil Bridge. There are applications for more funding than dollars are available. The committee will be asked to provide input in the selection process. The public
had the ability to offer comments on submitted projects. The MARC staff has scored the projects and will be presenting to various committees beginning in May. Recommendations will go to TTPC, the Air Quality Forum and MARC Board later this summer. No action needed at the meeting by the committee.

Retail Industry Assessment – Beth Dawson gave a report on this study, and raised some questions for the committee’s consideration. The retail environment is changing, and MARC staff is assembling data about retail sales, retail development in the region and in peer cities. The study will look at best practices to mitigate the impacts from the changing nature of retail trade and offer recommendations. The definition of retail trade includes retail establishments and food and drink establishments. In the KC region, retail trade uses 1.5 percent of all land; has 11,864 establishments with 21 percent of the region’s employment. The retail establishments tend to be along major corridors so more visible. Two-thirds of all retail establishments in the region are in Jackson and Johnson counties. There are 242 retail buildings with 100,000 square feet. The study will look at use taxes and transportation data where travel changes are occurring due to changes in retail trade. Jon Birkel suggested looking at Integra Real Estate research on retail.

Report and recommendation on National Park Service Historic Trails Strategy Plan Marlene Nagel reported that local communities from Sugar Creek to Gardner have worked with MARC and the National Park Service on a historic trails plan for the three historic trails through the KC region – the California, Santa Fe and Oregon trails. The plan, once completed will be incorporated into the regional MetroGreen Plan.

Other Items *Quick updates – Commissioner Walters reported that the next meeting is July 13, 2018, and he encouraged committee members to attend MARC’s Annual Assembly on June 8. The meeting was adjourned.