SUSTAINABLE PLACES POLICY COMMITTEE
November 8, 2019 Meeting Summary

Members Present
Commissioner Jim Walters, Unified Government, Co-Chair
Warren Adams-Levitt, Westside Housing
Brian Alferman, Johnson County
Jon Birkel, Hunt Midwest
Mary Cyr, Downtown Overland Park Partnership
Michael Frisch, UMKC
Doug Johnson, City of Overland Park
Edwin Lowndes, Housing Authority
Michael Park, City of Lee’s Summit
Josh Powers, Johnson County
Eva Steinman, FTA
Kelly Woodward, City of Gardner

Online Participants
Allison Smith, KDOT

MARC Staff Present
Ron Achelpohl, Karen Clawson, Beth Dawson, Tom Jacobs, Marlene Nagel, Patrick Trouba, Alex Rotenberry, Jermain Whitmore – MARC staff

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

Approval of September 2019 Meeting summary – Mary Cyr remarked that she now works for the Downtown Overland Park Partnership, and not the Mattie Rhodes Center. Jon Birkel added that name of The View should be changed to The Vue. The changes to the September summary were acknowledged and noted. Jon Birkel made a motion, seconded by Michael Frisch, to approve the September meeting summary with the noted changes. The motion carried.

Recap of Climate Action Summit
Tom Jacobs gave a recap on the Climate Action Summit and ongoing and future work taking place in our region. On September 14, 2019, the Climate Action Coalition sponsored a regional Climate Summit at Johnson County Community College. The sold-out event included participation from dozens of local and state elected officials, presentations by national and internationally recognized keynote speakers, and discussions among local thoughts leaders on a variety of panel discussions.

MARC continues to work closely with the Climate Action Coalition to develop a regional greenhouse gas inventory and a climate risk and vulnerability assessment by December 2019. Those work products will support the development of a climate action plan by fall of 2020.

Additionally, MARC’s metropolitan transportation plan (RTP 2050) includes goals related to climate resilience and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Accordingly, transportation models are being developed to estimate greenhouse gas emissions under different transportation scenarios. Subsequently, area stakeholders will be engaged to assess alternative strategies for inclusion in the plan.
**ConnectedKC 2050 – Project Prioritization**

Ron Achelpohl & Karen Clawson gave the ConnectedKC 2050 presentation. The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) is responsible for developing and maintaining a metropolitan transportation plan (MTP) to guide federal investments and serve as a blueprint for managing the region’s transportation system. Adoption of the next plan will be due by June of 2020. MARC is now working to develop the regional transportation plan for 2050, “Connected KC 2050” (formerly referred to as the Regional Transportation Plan RTP2050).

As a major next step towards completion of this plan, MARC’s planning and policy committees have been working to prioritize submitted projects. Committees have also advanced work on development of policies and strategies, land use, population and employment forecasts, update of the programming policy statement, and continuing community engagement activities. These activities include:

- Project prioritization process (underway)
- Public engagement activities (completed)
- Public online survey (completed)
- Recommendations to TTPC/Board in January/February (future)

Connected KC 2050 identifies needs and develops a budget for federal transportation funds that the metro area expects to receive over the next three decades. The plan contains:

- Vision: a long-term vision for the region’s transportation system.
- Goals and strategies: what we want to achieve by the year 2050 and how we plan to do it.
- Proposed regional transportation projects,
- Reasonably expected regional transportation investments to help accomplish goals.

Once adopted, updated policies/goals and strategies identified in the MTP will guide transportation investments in our region in future years. For more information, please see: [www.marc.org/2050](http://www.marc.org/2050)

Sustainable Places Policy Committee, Air Quality Forum, Regional Transit Coordinating Council, Highway, Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Aviation, Goods Movement, Technical Forecast Committee, and the MARC Board of Directors have all participated in prior discussions to support this work.

**Committee Discussion:**

- A committee member asked with energy generation/use becoming more efficient could also make some things counter intuitive, and Ms. Clawson responded that it does.
- One of the committee members inquired if law enforcement involvement with traffic signal timing causing increased time on roads could be addressed more, and Mr. Achelpohl answered that in terms of OGL’s work for MARC, there isn’t much involvement with law enforcement. However, it does not mean that it does not happen elsewhere.
- There was a question on the impact regarding micro mobility; and Mr. Achelpohl, as well as Ms. Clawson agreed that there has not been a lot of data currently as this is still rather new. However, it will be added to strategies over time.
- Someone noted that as there are no Kansas state projects ranked in the top, median scores should also be considered.
- It was asked if the feedback from scoring was well distributed throughout the region, and Mr. Achelpohl acknowledged that the projects are based on merit; but it can be tracked.
- Another committee member suggested to either study or show where funds go and the difference in distribution of public and private funds.
- Lastly, someone inquired if there was any consideration of economic justice/equity, and Mr. Achelpohl confirmed that the planning process involved an analysis of environmental justice.

**Retail Trade Analysis**

Patrick Trouba gave the presentation of the retail trade analysis and requested input from the committee. This was an update to a presentation made in May of 2018 (where data was available). It gives information about the...
MARC region’s exposure to changes in the retail industry. For the MARC study, staff looked at both the 44-45 category of retail and the sub category of 722 for food & drink establishments. To explain a few of the categories:

• Food & beverage in retail includes grocery stores, convenience stores without gasoline sales, meat shops, bakeries and liquor stores.
• General merchandise includes department stores, warehouse stores, and supercenters.
• Miscellaneous retail includes office supplies, florists, pet and pet supplies, and mobile homes.
• Non-store retailers include electronic shopping and mail order, vending machine operators, and fuel dealers.
• Category 722 covers food and beverage that is procured through places such as restaurants and coffee shops.
• Category 722 was added to the study because traditionally development that focused on retail excluded food and drink. Current retail development practices have begun to focus on experience marketing which tends to have strong inclusion of food and drink businesses.

The number of retail establishments in the MARC region is one of the sections where data has not been updated because no new data has been released. The Census Bureau has not yet released 2017 Business Pattern data, which tracks business establishments. Jackson and Johnson counties lead in number of total establishments, employees, and value. But in other metrics measured in percentages, retail is not as important to the overall economy for Jackson and Johnson as it is to other counties. Although other MARC region counties have far less retail establishments than Jackson and Johnson, for most retail is a higher share of their total establishments.

We were missing significant data on land parcels from county assessors for 2018, so the 2016 metrics were used. Jackson and Johnson have the highest appraised valuation of their total commercial parcels, but commercial parcel value has a higher share of the total value of other counties, particularly Wyandotte and Platte. It was notable that the numbers for Miami County are likely underestimates, as we only had assessed values, not appraised values. Out of all the parcels in the region, 2.2% were missing appraised values in our data, and a further 2.2% had an appraised value of zero, which is likely untrue. We had 95.6% completeness on appraised parcel values. In terms of acreage, Johnson, Jackson, and Clay counties have the most commercial acreage. When you take a look at value per acre, Clay’s commercial acres seem to be worth proportionately less, while Platte’s commercial acres seem to be worth proportionately more. At a regional level, commercial parcels are 7.6 percent of the MARC region’s $206.6 billion of value, and 1.5 percent of the region’s 2.7 million acres.

Since the last report, 40 new retail properties have been built. The average vacancy rate for the MARC region decreased from 5.4% in last year’s presentation to currently 5.2%. There were not many properties with a below-average vacancy rate for sale. This flips when you consider those retail properties with a greater-than-average vacancy rate. Most, if not all of them, are for sale. This is a change from the first quarter of 2018 in last year’s presentation, where some properties in this category were not for sale. As of the end of October, a significant amount of retail properties over 100,000 square feet are for sale. In last year’s presentation, a list of the largest retail properties was shown, which has been updated. Oak Park Mall, Nebraska Furniture Mart, and Ward Parkway Center come out on top. But what was also interesting was to look at the largest demolished retail properties, since there are some recent entries, such as Great Mall of the Great Plains, and Metcalf South Shopping Center. The Metro North Mall, which was the 3rd-largest retail development in May 2018’s presentation, is now on the demolished list.

Starting from 2010 through 2018, retail employment has steadily risen at a moderate rate in the MARC region. The same story is true for several counties. Employment has grown except in the smallest counties, where it has held steady. With 2016 being the most up to date information regarding retail employment change by quarter, there were Quarter 1 dips every year; however, retail employment overall has trended upward. At a regional level, as of 2018 we had a retail employment share of 18%. “Food Services and Drinking Places” are a
substantial share of this employment for the region, with the next largest shares being “General Merchandise Stores” and “Food and Beverage Stores”.

The Missouri Department of Revenue had taxable sales data, but Kansas only reported the amount of sales tax. If our calculations for Kansas are correct, then the MARC region generated $32.2 billion of taxable sales in the year 2018, up $1.3 billion from 2016, the data year of last year’s presentation. As expected, Jackson and Johnson counties conducted the most business. Kansas and Missouri also have a use tax for taxing out of state sales where the goods come into Kansas and Missouri. Once again, Missouri had taxable sales data available whereas Kansas just had use tax totals. But if the assumption is correct that each transaction in Kansas where use tax applied generated the maximum amount of use tax, then Johnson County generated over twice the taxable sales of Jackson County, and the MARC region generated $5.5 billion of use-taxable sales, up $400 million from 2016. There will be an annual retail report for the region being developed in the future.

Committee Discussion:
- One of the committee members recommended showing trends that reflect the future of retail, and the breakdowns of the retail employment shares.
- Another committee member proposed looking into why those demolished retail buildings failed, and any feasible replacements.
- Someone else mentioned adding in population trends and overlay them with other trends. The raw data per county and per capita basis.
- It was mentioned to include the breakdown of each retail partnership.
- A committee member advocated to add in personal services components such as places like gyms buying out vacant retail establishments.

2020 Work Plan
Marlene Nagel presented the 2020 Work Plan for the committee and asked for any additional input. The committee supported the work plan, and Ms. Nagel noted that there will also be a focus on increasing membership.

Committee Member sharing.
Josh Powers –
- Their micro transit pilot is going great, and there will be a vote this month to fully implement it.

Mary Cyr –
- Digital Sandbox came to Overland Park and are working on reorganizing a technology stakeholders’ group for their upcoming summit. They are also inviting in Edison Spaces and trying to reorganize Downtown Overland Park into an idea district.

Jon Birkel –
- They are looking at developing single family detached lots.

Kelly Woodard –
- They are starting to implement the final part of the PSP project.

Brian Alferman –
- Getting more involved in a leadership role in their Greenhouse Gas Emission work.
- Have purchased their first electric vehicle and working on acquiring a fleet.

Edwin Lowndes –
- Three new mixed-use properties with income restrictions focusing on workforce housing/rental.
- Replacing an old extended stay hotel up north with affordable housing.
Doug Johnson –
  • They have started implementation of their Forward Overland Park program.

Other Business
There was no further business to discuss.

The next meeting of the committee is January 10, 2020. The meeting was adjourned.