The Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) serves as a nonprofit association of city and county governments and the official metropolitan planning organization for the Greater Kansas City region. MARC promotes regional cooperation and innovative solutions for issues that reach across the boundaries of individual communities. MARC is governed by a board of local elected officials, with guidance from a broad array of committees whose work focuses on planning for efficient transportation systems, a healthy environment, enhanced emergency response capabilities, effective government and caring communities.

In October 2010, MARC received a $4.25 million planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to advance the region’s vision of achieving sustainability through the creation of vibrant, green and connected centers and corridors. The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development summarizes the plans — existing and in development — that will guide this important work over the next few years.
Creating Sustainable Places

A Regional Plan for Sustainable Development in Greater Kansas City

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www.marc.org/sustainableplaces
Introduction: A Shared Regional Vision

Change is inevitable. Over the next 30 years, the population of the Greater Kansas City region is expected to expand from today’s 2 million to an estimated 2.7 million. Where will these people live and work? How will they travel? Can we find ways to retain the character of our communities and still have a thriving, sustainable region? What can we do now to create a better community for our children and grandchildren?

Along with population change, we also face economic changes and demographic changes that force us to reevaluate past practices. The rising costs of infrastructure, energy and public services demand that we find more efficient ways to grow; environmental expectations require us to more fully respect our natural systems; and an older, more diverse population will demand new housing and mobility choices.

Working together, citizens and leaders throughout the region have developed a shared goal for a sustainable region — one that balances a thriving economy, social equity and a healthy environment, meeting today’s needs without compromising the needs of future generations. Together, we share a vision of achieving sustainability by creating more vibrant, connected and green centers and corridors.

This will not happen without hard work, careful planning and thoughtful decisions. Many local governments are already incorporating sustainability principles into their comprehensive plans. And regional plans developed over the past few years to address a wide variety of issues — air and water quality, transportation, land use, health, and energy efficiency and conservation — also focus on sustainability.

Taken as a whole, these plans represent a comprehensive strategy to guide how we want to grow, adapt to change, and create more vibrant, sustainable places. This document, Creating Sustainable Places: A Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, is intended to illustrate how coordinated regional and local plans inform and direct the vision of a sustainable region.

Key Regional Sustainability Principles

**ECONOMY**
Create an innovative and competitive 21st century economy, supported by a highly skilled workforce positioned to take full advantage of emerging opportunities, including green jobs.

**SOCIETY**
Support a rich diversity of cultural opportunities, encourage cooperative relations, and promote the just and equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

**ENVIRONMENT**
Preserve, protect and restore natural assets and work to improve the quality of the environment.
Meeting Our Changing Needs

Why focus on sustainability? A number of important changes are underway that force us to rethink our usual patterns of development. How we respond to these changes now will determine our ability to grow and prosper as a region in the future.

• **We are getting older.**
  As baby boomers age, we can expect the percentage of elderly residents to double by 2040, creating a strong demand for new housing, living and transportation choices.

• **Family makeup is changing.**
  People are staying single, marrying later and having fewer children. The dominant housing style built in the last decade consisted of upper-end, single-family, detached houses with large yards, but families with children now make up only 22 percent of households.

• **We are becoming more diverse.**
  Although the region has a relatively low percentage of ethnic minorities, 25 percent, this percentage is rising.

• **Transportation costs are increasing.**
  High gasoline prices have an especially significant impact in the Kansas City region, where so much of our travel is auto dependent. As transportation prices rise, people will seek housing and employment locations with more affordable transportation options.

• **The cost of infrastructure is rising.**
  Continuing to build outward requires new streets, sewers and other services, which could cost the region an estimated $1 billion more per year for construction and maintenance than more compact and sustainable development.

Sustainable development can also help address long-term regional issues, including the geographic concentration of poverty and minorities, the underutilization of commercial properties, and limited transportation choices in many parts of the region.
Regional and Local Policies and Plans

The region’s vision for sustainability is built on more than 10 years of planning efforts and input from literally thousands of residents on how the region should grow and develop. From Creating Quality Places in 1999 to the recently adopted Transportation Outlook 2040 plan, the region’s citizens, local governments, businesses, and institutions are working toward a region that is more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable.

Key regional plans and strategies, which are summarized in more detail in the appendix, include:

- Regional Land-Use Vision
- Creating Quality Places
- Transportation Outlook 2040
- Smart Moves Transit Plan
- Clean Air Action Plan
- MetroGreen
- Solid Waste Management District Plan
- Regional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Natural Resources Inventory
- Stormwater Quality Standards
- Metro Outlook

This work is also found in a variety of local and regional plans adopted by area communities over the last decade, such as:

- Kansas City, Mo., Climate Protection Plan
- Johnson County, Kan., Sustainability Plan
- Vision Metcalf (Overland Park, Kan.)
- Lee’s Summit Livable Streets Policy
- Lenexa Vision 2030
- Trails KC (Kansas City, Mo.)
- Blueprint for Liberty
- Platte Profile
- Numerous city and county comprehensive plans

Taken together, these plans constitute our regional plan for sustainable development. While they cover many different elements and locations in our community, they blend into a single vision of a community that is economically prosperous, provides our residents and future generations with a high quality of life, values our natural and historic assets, and creates opportunities and choices for all of our residents.
Timeline: Regional Planning and Initiatives Related to Sustainability

- = Included in the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development  
  = Related Plans/Activities

1999
Creating Quality Places

2000

2001
Metro Outlook

- Transportation Outlook 2030
- Best Management Practices for Stormwater Quality
- Smart Moves Transit Plan
- MetroGreen

2002
Homeland Security Strategy Plan
Natural Resources Inventory

2003

2004

2005
One KC Voice Citizen Engagement Initiative
Clean Air Action Plan

- Metropolitan Health Access Policy Assessment
- Metro Outlook 2.0
- Transportation Safety Blueprint

2006

2007
Academy for Sustainable Communities Launched

2008
First Suburbs Coalition Green Idea Book
America’s Green Region
Imagine KC

2009
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Safety Net Capacity Report
- Solid Waste Management District Strategic Plan
- Regional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy
- Regional Sustainability Vision and Strategic Planning Framework

2010
- Land-Use Vision
- Transportation Outlook 2040
- HUD Sustainable Communities Grant Award
Common Themes: Vibrant, Connected and Green

The individual plans that comprise the regional plan for sustainable development have much in common. Although they address a wide variety of issues and were developed independently over time, these plans — along with many local government plans — share a number of important themes related to sustainability.

• Preserving and protecting our resources, including both natural resources and the built environment.
• Connecting people and places through more focused investment and reinvestment in activity centers and along key corridors.
• Providing new opportunities and choices for how we live, work and travel from place to place.
• Respecting local plans and retaining individual community character.
• Building partnerships between local governments, the private sector, regional institutions and the public.
• Engaging citizens in decision-making processes.
• Supporting an innovative, competitive and adaptive regional economy.
• Outreach, education and capacity building.

Current and Potential Activity Centers and Corridors

At the heart of the plan to achieve the regional vision is a development pattern that emphasizes a network of attractive, vibrant centers connected by transportation corridors that offer residents choices for getting from place to place, including public transit.
Common Goals

In creating the plans that comprise the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, regional leaders and residents alike have expressed interest in common goals that are integrated and reinforced throughout the plans. These goals include:

- Increasing the level of development focused in existing and emerging activity centers and along key transportation corridors.
- Promoting the development of vibrant, attractive places where citizens want to live, work, shop and entertain.
- Preserving and protecting the region’s natural resources and incorporating green spaces into community activity centers.
- Connecting vibrant, green places with multimodal transportation corridors.
- Increasing the housing, employment, and transportation choices and ensuring accessibility for all of the region’s residents.
- Supporting an innovative, competitive and adaptive regional economy.
- Building the capacity of MARC and local communities to achieve our regional vision.

What makes a vibrant, connected, green region?

**Activity centers that offer:**
- Mixed-use amenities and a mix of housing options
- Compact development
- Pedestrian and bicycle accommodations
- Public transit services
- Access to natural areas and green spaces
- Diversity in age and income levels
- Smooth transitions to surrounding neighborhoods

**Transportation corridors that offer:**
- Accommodations for different modes of transportation
- Easy flow of people and goods between places
- An extension of vibrant places with mixed uses
- Connections to housing, employment centers, green spaces and natural areas
- Smooth transitions to surrounding neighborhoods
Implementation

Creating Sustainable Places is not only a regional vision and plan to guide how we grow and develop, but a strategy for moving our communities from planning to action. This strategy includes the following steps:

- **Organizing for Success** – Building on the region’s strong track record of collaboration to provide leadership, coordinate outreach and education activities, broaden public understanding of and involvement in sustainability issues, and strengthen stakeholder capacity to address them.

- **Enhancing Decision Making** – Developing new tools, policies and practices necessary to make sound investments and accelerate sustainable development.

- **Demonstrating New Models** — Applying these new tools to key corridors and activity centers through demonstration projects that can help transform the ways neighborhoods and communities grow and develop.

Sustainable Communities Planning Grant

In October 2010, a consortium of more than 60 regional partners, led by the Mid-America Regional Council, received a $4.25 million planning grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to advance the implementation of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development.

The Creating Sustainable Places project is overseen by a Consortium Coordinating Committee with representation from local governments, businesses, nonprofits, equity organizations, universities, professional associations and housing organizations. The committee will provide regional leadership on sustainable development; provide oversight for grant funds, including setting priorities and policies for fund allocation; and provide advice and expertise to regional partners on sustainable development policies.

Consortium Coordinating Committee leaders will meet regularly with a select group of other leaders, including the MARC Board of Directors, the Total Transportation Policy Committee, the Air Quality Forum and other appropriate regional policy committees to share information and identify opportunities to integrate planning efforts.

Once or twice each year, MARC will convene a Partner Congress to provide key input into the implementation of Creating Sustainable Places. Stakeholder work groups will focus on particular projects and issues.

**Key Projects**

- Community engagement and outreach, including the Imagine KC series on KCPT public television.
- Work with social equity partners to ensure that under-represented population groups are included and their needs are considered.
- Training classes and forums offered through the Academy for Sustainable Communities.
- Monitoring and evaluation using a set of indicators developed to measure progress.
- Development of tools for use by partner agencies, including a visualization tool, an economic pro forma, retail center reuse strategies and an updated natural resource inventory.
- Design of regional housing development capacity to help meet the needs of changing markets.
- Workforce development to increase employment opportunities along key corridors and within activity centers.
- Developing plans for six key corridors that integrate land use, transportation, housing, environment and other sustainability factors.
- Support for housing development and rehabilitation in the Green Impact Zone.
- Selection of four to six demonstration projects to help local communities advance sustainable development practices.
Creating Sustainable Places Work Flow

Change happens in places, not plans, and the Creating Sustainable Places initiative is focused on implementing new policies, processes and projects that will help us achieve our vision of a sustainable region. The project’s workflow can be seen both as a pyramid, with layers of activities and choices that build towards a goal of sustainability, and as a funnel, focusing our energies towards on-the-ground implementation.
Adapting and Integrating Plans

Through the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, we hope to sharpen our understanding of the best strategies to take significant steps towards sustainability, not just in model corridors and demonstration projects, but across the region. Case studies and best practices from specific projects implemented during the three-year grant period will help inform future plans, in an adaptive management cycle.

- **PLAN**: The Consortium Coordinating Committee will begin by developing plans for six key corridors and four to six demonstration projects. This work will be guided by sustainability principles, and will integrate the common themes and goals shared by existing regional plans (summarized in the appendix) and local government plans.

- **ACT**: The Creating Sustainable Places partners will not only help develop tools, increase capacities and identify policy changes that move the region towards its vision of sustainability, but also help put these new tools, capacities and policies into action in sustainable development and redevelopment projects in across the region.

- **LEARN**: As development and redevelopment occurs along key corridors and in activity centers, the Consortium Coordinating Committee will monitor data and indicators to measure progress and identify best practices. The lessons learned will be incorporated into future planning, continuing the adaptive cycle.

Working together in the coming months and years, we will address a broad agenda that incorporates sustainability principles — social equity, a thriving economy and a healthy environment — into all of our regional plans. The shared vision of sustainability will also help integrate plans in ways we have not achieved to date. The Regional Plan for Sustainable Development should not be seen as a finished product. As existing plans are updated and new ones developed within the framework of sustainability, this plan will continue to evolve.
# Appendix

## PLAN SUMMARIES

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Land-Use Vision

Purpose: Provide a forecast and vision for metropolitan growth, rooted in the objectives and strategies contained in local comprehensive plans, that supports an increased level of development and reinvestment in existing and emerging activity centers and along key transportation corridors.

Goals/Objectives: • Accurately predict future growth and shifting demographic patterns.
• Help the region adapt to changing market forces to ensure economic competitiveness.
• Preserve and protect the region’s natural resources.
• Inform the long-range transportation planning process.
• Encourage development and reinvestment in key activity centers and along strategic corridors.

Key Strategies: • Give priority to funding transportation projects that serve activity centers along locally identified corridors.
• Adopt planning tools, such as form-based codes, that encourage development in activity centers and along key transportation corridors.
• Target public investment and the use of incentives to remove barriers that inhibit adaptation to market changes and attract more intense development to strategic corridors and activity centers.
• Use public policies and investments to focus development where it can be served most efficiently and affordably.
• Increase levels of transit service along priority corridors.
• Develop new and innovative incentive packages to achieve redevelopment implemented at the local level.

Potential Benchmarks:
• Change in population along key corridors
• Number of residential permits issued in infill/redevelopment sites
• Changes in mix of incomes and housing values in developed areas
• Percent of activity centers with local land-use plans
Creating Quality Places

Lead Committee: Creating Quality Places Steering Committee
Date: 1999

Purpose:
Creating Quality Places seeks to shape future development in ways that will maintain and enhance the high quality of life that our residents enjoy.

It includes 20 design principles that represent a powerful consensus on what is needed to design successful neighborhoods, vibrant mixed-use commercial areas and efficient transportation systems — all within a healthy natural environment.

Goals/Objectives:

- **Homes and Neighborhoods**: Create quality neighborhoods that offer choice and diversity in housing; linkages to surrounding areas; reinvestment in existing activity centers; distinct identities; pedestrian/cyclist-friendly streets; a variety of public green spaces; and the opportunity for residents to live and work within the neighborhood.

- **Commercial Development**: Provide mixed-use activity centers, built to a scale compatible with their surroundings and flexible enough to meet market demands; built with quality materials that allow for changing uses over time; with safe, walkable streets and sidewalks, and convenient parking choices.

- **Transportation and Public Places**: Offer balanced, multimodal transportation systems, with quality local streets that are an integral part of a network of transportation corridors, facilities that encourage pedestrian and bicycle use, a regional public transit network and connections to quality public spaces.

- **Environmental Quality**: Incorporate features and amenities that minimize negative impacts on the environment, maximize energy efficiency and preserve major natural features.

Key Strategies:

- Build collaboration among public, private and civic interests.
- Support quality development through policies that consider both new growth and the redevelopment and adaptive reuse of established areas.
- Provide a database of tools, policies, regulations and incentives that can be used to create quality places in local communities.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Potential Benchmarks:

- Percent of residents who can walk to activity centers (e.g., jobs, shopping)
- Proportion of mixed-use development
- Availability of transit and bicycle/pedestrian facilities
- Quantity of green space in developed areas
Transportation Outlook 2040
Lead Committee: Total Transportation Policy Committee
Date: June 2010

Purpose: Transportation Outlook 2040, the Kansas City region’s long-range transportation plan, describes how the region will manage, operate and invest in its multimodal transportation system for the next several decades. The federal government requires MARC to update this long-range transportation plan every five years.

Goals/Objectives: • Maximize mobility and access to opportunities for all area residents. • Decrease the use of fossil fuels. • Support an innovative, competitive 21st-century economy. • Protect and restore the region’s natural resources. • Coordinate transportation and land-use planning. • Facilitate healthy, active living. • Improve safety and security for all transportation users. • Ensure the transportation system is maintained in good condition. • Manage the system to achieve reliable and efficient performance.

Key Strategies: • Maximize use of existing infrastructure. • Improve connectivity and access. • Promote nonmotorized transportation options. • Preserve, enhance, and expand regional transit and paratransit services. • Integrate land-use and transportation planning. • Enhance, preserve and connect high-quality natural resources.

Potential Benchmarks: • System condition • Vehicle miles traveled • Transit coverage • Air quality • Affordability • Safety • Active transportation options • Carbon dioxide reduction
**Smart Moves Transit Plan**

*Lead Committee: Total Transportation Policy Committee*
*Date: 2002; Update 2008*

**Purpose:** The Smart Moves Transit Plan articulates a vision for how transit should serve the Kansas City metropolitan area in the years and decades ahead. It proposes a primarily bus-based system along priority corridors that connects people to employment and activity centers.

**Goals/Objectives:**
- Strengthen communities and improve the quality of life of residents and visitors throughout the region by making transit an equal or better option to automobile travel.
- Expand and enhance multimodal transit service throughout the metropolitan region.
- Support the economy through accessible transportation options.
- Safeguard the environment and improve public health through increased transit ridership.
- Develop new or expanded service plans and funding strategies.
- Develop and adopt model polices and ordinances to maximize transit effectiveness.
- Provide connections between major residential and employment centers.
- Use transit capital investment and services to encourage revitalization and economic development.
- Reduce vehicle emissions by providing well-connected, multimodal transit service options.
- Promote the integration of environmentally beneficial vehicle technologies into transit fleets.

**Potential Benchmarks:**
- Increase in ridership
- Increase in transit coverage
- Reduction in traffic congestion
- Improvements to air quality
Clean Air Action Plan

Purpose:
The Clean Air Action Plan provides a comprehensive, voluntary, community-based strategy for reducing ground-level ozone pollution in the Kansas City metropolitan area. It includes formal, public commitments by participating stakeholders to work collaboratively through new and existing partnerships to maximize the plan’s air quality benefits.

Goals/Objectives:
- Reduce ozone-forming emissions in order to protect the health of area residents.
- Reduce emissions earlier than required under regulatory timelines to ensure continued compliance with federal ozone standards.
- Through attainment of clean air standards, help protect the region’s economic competitiveness.
- Identify regulatory strategies for future consideration in the event the region violates federal ozone standards.

Key Strategies:
- Place new emissions controls on existing power plants in the region.
- Reduce emissions from on-road and off-road diesel engines.
- Expand public education and outreach efforts.
- Promote sustainable growth and development practices, including land-use policies that decrease automobile reliance, natural-resource conservation and green-building practices.

Potential Benchmarks:
- Reduction in ambient ozone concentration
- Increase in native landscaping/green infrastructure
- Increased public awareness and willingness to take action
- Number of diesel vehicle retrofits
- Increased transit ridership and coverage

Meet new federal standards for ground-level ozone, currently proposed to be 60-70 parts per billion.
MetroGreen®

Lead Committee: MetroGreen Alliance
Date: 2002

Purpose: The MetroGreen Action Plan provides a greenprint for a metropolitan trails system that connects urban and rural green corridors throughout seven counties in the Kansas City region. The plan is also designed to protect and improve water quality in the region for the next 100 years, conserving and enhancing the region’s existing natural elements. Above all, MetroGreen exists to ensure that area residents continue to enjoy a high quality of life. MetroGreen builds on the vision plan created in 1991 by the Prairie Gateway Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Goals/Objectives:
• Protect natural resources
• Restore high-value natural areas
• Connect people to these resources and to each other

Key Strategies:
• Preserve and protect stream corridors in the Kansas City area by helping to use floodplain lands to absorb floodwaters.
• Link together corridors of land to the landscapes and destinations that people value.
• Foster growth that results in new development patterns that are walkable, bikeable and support a diversity of land uses.
• Where appropriate, build pathways that people can travel by foot, bicycle, rollerblade or horseback.
• Make the corridors wide enough so that they will help to protect water courses, preserve historic landscapes and beautify area roadways.

Potential Benchmarks:
• Miles of trails and greenways
• Communities with stream-protection guidelines in place
• Improved water quality
• Number of bicycle and pedestrian facilities
• Property values
Solid Waste Management District Strategic Plan

Lead Committee: Solid Waste Management District
Date: 2009

Purpose: The Solid Waste Management District’s Strategic Plan of Action guides short-term planning efforts and identifies long-term strategies to provide consistent access to solid waste services for residents and businesses, increase waste diversion and public awareness/participation, and sustainably manage waste for the next 30 years.

Goals/Objectives:

- Work toward a waste diversion goal of 80 percent by 2023, with incremental goals of 40 percent by 2013 and 60 percent by 2018.
- Promote sustainable solid waste management principles and practices.
- Provide access to consistent solid waste services for all residents and businesses.
- Increase awareness through ongoing education and information dissemination.
- Develop a funding mechanism to support long-term infrastructure development and ongoing efforts.

Key Strategies:

- Aggressively pursue the waste diversion goal of 80 percent by 2023.
- Increase availability of core services (trash, recycling, yard waste, bulky items and household hazardous waste).
- Use permitting, contracting or cooperative arrangements to improve services and control costs.
- Use mandatory recycling and pay-as-you-throw programs to improve participation and diversion.
- Strengthen illegal dumping and enforcement programs.
- Implement policies and ordinances that provide incentives for waste minimization and diversion, eco-purchasing and green-building practices.
- Work collaboratively on infrastructure development to ensure adequate processing and disposal capacity.

Potential Benchmarks:

- Amount of waste sent to landfills
- Access to solid waste services
- Tons of household hazardous waste, yard waste and recycling collected
- Processing/disposal capacity
Regional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy

Lead Committee: Participating REECS Communities
Date: May 2010

Purpose: The Regional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy is designed to increase opportunities for communities across the region to conserve energy, use it efficiently and consider renewables. The strategy fosters greater regional collaboration through community partnerships and public outreach, involvement and education.

Goals/Objectives:

- Help local governments pursue opportunities for energy efficiency, energy conservation and renewable energy.
- Develop public education, outreach and civic involvement strategies to help educate stakeholders and constituents about energy-efficiency issues and possibilities.
- Promote the adoption of energy-efficiency/conservation building and development codes, specifications and standards.
- Create incentive programs to promote energy efficiency and conservation.
- Assess, monitor and report the effectiveness of clean-energy strategies.
- Lead by example, modeling innovative practices in local government.
- Adopt and implement updated strategies for codes and standards.
- Establish effective partnerships among state, regional and local energy programs.
- Implement education, outreach and public-involvement strategies.
- Create incentives for energy efficiency and conservation.
- Link energy strategies with related sustainability efforts.
- Assess, monitor and report the effectiveness of clean-energy strategies.
- Promote emerging solutions and technologies to encourage market transformation.

Potential Benchmarks:

- Energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions
- Number of local governments adopting energy-efficiency and conservation codes and ordinances
- Energy-efficiency retrofits and weatherizations completed
- Number of LEED-certified buildings
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan

Purpose: The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors the Kansas City region to create an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. It provides an analysis of the regional economy, integrates human and physical capital into economic planning and provides useful benchmarks for evaluating progress.

Goals/Objectives:  
- Economic competitiveness rooted in innovative capacity.  
- High levels and use of human capacity.  
- Inherent attractiveness of place and amenities.  
- Social cohesion.  
- Strategic decision-making capacity.  
- Efficiency in the use of resources.

Key Strategies:  
- Create and maintain communities that are attractive places with amenities to meet the needs of a diverse population.  
- Raise the capacity of governmental agencies to make strategic decisions.  
- Develop and retain human capital to compete globally.  
- Capitalize on the region’s strengths for strategic economic development, including creation of a world class Life Science/Animal Health Industry.  
- Capitalize on the region’s strengths to build a Transportation/Logistics/International Trade Industry.

Potential Benchmarks:  
- Number of businesses in activity centers  
- Growth in employment  
- Growth in key sectors  
- Patents issued
Other Plans and Strategies Currently in Development

*Lead Committees: To Be Determined*

**Affordable Housing:**
The region is in the process of developing a coordinated and coherent affordable-housing strategy. Local community development agencies are currently working on a report on barriers to fair housing. In addition, an assessment of the regional affordable-housing market is underway, with support from several housing agencies (including LISC and NeighborWorks), two area foundations and MARC. The study should be completed by summer 2011.

Housing partners are also talking with housing organizations in other metropolitan areas; investigating what capacities are needed for the region to successfully develop affordable housing; evaluating current capacities within the metropolitan area; and discussing how we can enhance those capacities.

The partners will soon begin to share the results of their work with a widening circle of housing stakeholders, including public housing authorities, city and county housing officials, nonprofit housing organizations, for-profit housing developers, and the financial community. A draft regional affordable-housing strategy should be available for review by fall 2011.

**Social Equity:**
As part of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, MARC has assembled a number of local and national partner organizations whose focus is on social equity. The goal is to ensure that all populations — including people of color, people living in poverty, people with special needs and other often under-represented groups — can realize the benefits from implementation of the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development and its component plans.

The social equity partners are currently focused on the development of strategies to ensure that local communities are actively engaged in the development of plans that will affect them. In addition, they are working with other MARC partners to develop a template for community engagement and strategies to ensure that people of color, people in poverty, and other populations are able to access the benefits from housing development, job development, and the creation of a sustainable, vibrant region.

A first draft of the region’s social equity strategy should be available for consideration by mid-2011.
**Healthy Living:** The region is in the process of building the organizational and collaborative structure necessary to address issues of healthy living and access to healthy food in a comprehensive manner.

Through the work of KC Healthy Kids, a foundation dedicated to addressing issues of obesity and health, the region has formed a Food Policy Coalition that has developed a strategic plan to encourage healthy eating by addressing enhanced local production, improved school and institutional healthy food options, and addressing food deserts and access to healthy foods.

A similar coalition called Building a Healthier Heartland, which includes health departments, community groups and the business community, has just completed development of a strategic plan aimed at addressing issues related to healthy lifestyles and the built environment.

The Creating Sustainable Places initiative will not only support the work of these coalitions, but also help to integrate their principles and strategies into the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development. The initiative will also work with local health departments, through the Metropolitan Official Health Agencies of the Kansas City Area (MOHAKCA) committee, to develop an assessment tool that can be used to evaluate the health impact of new developments and redevelopment plans.

**Workforce Development:** A new regional workforce development initiative is working to meet the labor force needs of employers in the Kansas City region by identifying emerging and high-demand occupations and industry sectors, and developing training and educational opportunities that will help match workers to jobs.

The Regional Workforce Intelligence Network of Greater Kansas City (RWIN) — a coalition of economic development professionals, chambers of commerce, workforce centers, community colleges and universities — was convened to encourage greater collaboration among the region’s workforce data and information professionals. In March 2011, RWIN launched a monthly dashboard that measures changes in the labor force, unemployment, help wanted ads, educational attainment and training. The dashboard also includes a monthly employer confidence survey that will help identify real-time changes in hiring and other economic shifts in the region.

Other surveys underway include a region-wide survey of employers to provide a broad understanding of labor force needs in the Kansas City area, and a survey focused specifically on the needs of the health care industry and health care technology. A full analysis of the metro area labor market will be presented at a workforce summit planned for mid-2011.

A Sector Partnership Task Force, formed in 2010, is focusing on four specific sectors: supply chain, manufacturing, bioscience and health care. Attention is also focused on energy-related careers, with the formation of a Green Jobs Task Force that will address the increasing demand for training and placement in energy retrofit jobs.
Natural Resources Inventory

Purpose: Create an inventory of valuable natural-resource assets and ecological features in the Kansas City region to provide a framework for environmental planning at local and regional levels.

Goals/Objectives:
- Value the region’s rich heritage of abundant natural resources.
- Pursue efforts to conserve existing areas worthy of protection.
- Identify opportunities to restore lost assets in ways that strengthen the region’s environment and economy.

Key Strategies:
- Provide rich information about the community’s natural resource elements, such as lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, prairies and forests.
- Relate NRI information to other community infrastructure like streets and roads, parks or MetroGreen trails.
- Offer community planners and policymakers the opportunity to see where potentially high-value natural resources are located in relation to developed areas and other community assets.
- Provide policy direction based on three planning principles: thinking regionally and acting locally; protecting and restoring natural systems; and integrating resource protection into development plans and regulations.

Potential Benchmarks:
- Improved air quality
- Improved water quality
- Increase in green spaces
- Number of communities with resource protection plans
Stormwater Quality Standards

Purpose:
This manual provides a guide for applying stormwater best management practices to land development in the Kansas City region in order to control the volume and quality of stormwater discharges from developed sites, maintain overall water quality and create more environmentally sensitive site designs.

Goals/Objectives:
Two primary goals of this integrated stormwater approach are to:

- Balance future development with environmental health and quality of life.
- Comply with water-quality regulations such as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II requirements.

Key Strategies:
- Introduce community-wide, stream-buffer systems through enactment of stream-setback ordinances.
- Apply soil protection and restoration requirements to residential developments.
- Capture runoff from all impervious surfaces in non-residential developments using bioretention areas.
- Discourage or eliminate direct connections of impervious areas to storm drains.
- Regulate commercial and industrial “hot spots.”

Potential Benchmarks:
- Improved water quality
- Reduced flooding
- Number of jurisdictions with stream-setback ordinances

Lead Committees: Kansas City Metro Chapter of the American Public Works Association (APWA); MARC Water Quality Education Committee
Date: September 2006; Update August 2009
Metro Outlook

Purpose: Metro Outlook provides a model for understanding progress toward a vision of the Kansas City region as a world-class metropolitan area, effectively competing in the global economy by sustaining a rising quality of life attractive to talented people.

Goals/Objectives: Metro Outlook identifies the following regional goals and provides measures of progress and comparisons to peer metros for each:

- Economic competitiveness rooted in innovative capacity
- High levels and use of human capacity
- Inherent attractiveness of place and amenities
- Social cohesion
- Strategic decision-making capacity
- Efficiency in the use of resources

Key Strategies:

- Use data indicators and measurements to evaluate how well the Kansas City region is making progress.
- Educate the community concerning the region’s trends and challenges, including how they affect and are affected by our decisions.
- Initiate regional discussions and catalyze actions that improve the prospects for positive community change.

Potential Benchmarks:

- Attractiveness of place
- Social cohesion
- Strategic decision-making capacity
- Institutional performance
- Human capacity
- Economic competitiveness
- Efficient use of resources

Assess our ability to create, retain and nurture our most important resource — educated, innovative people.
Creating Sustainable Places Partners

The Creating Sustainable Places consortium includes key partners representing a broad coalition of local governments, representing over 90 percent of the metropolitan area’s population, as well as the business and development community, universities, housing organizations, equity organizations, professional organizations and nonprofits.

Local Government Partners:
Cass County, Mo.
Clay County, Mo.
Jackson County, Mo.
Johnson County, Kan.
Leavenworth County, Kan.
Platte County, Mo.
Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kan.
City of Belton, Mo.
City of Blue Springs, Mo.
City of Gardner, Kan.
City of Gladstone, Mo.
City of Grain Valley, Mo.
City of Grandview, Mo.
City of Independence, Mo.
City of Kansas City, Mo.
City of Leavenworth, Kan.
City of Lee’s Summit, Mo.
City of Liberty, Mo.
City of Merriam, Kan.
City of Mission, Kan.
City of North Kansas City, Mo.
City of Oak Grove, Mo.
City of Olathe, Kan.
City of Overland Park, Kan.
City of Pleasant Hill, Mo.
City of Prairie Village, Kan.
City of Shawnee, Kan.
City of Raymore, Mo.
City of Raytown, Mo.
City of Westwood, Kan.

First Suburbs Coalition
Metropolitan Official Health Agencies of the Kansas City Area (MOHAKCA)
Mid-America Regional Council
Kansas City Area Transportation Authority

State Supporters:
Kansas Department of Commerce
Kansas Department of Health and Environment
Kansas Department of Transportation
Missouri Department of Economic Development
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Missouri Department of Transportation

Equity and Engagement Partners:
Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO)
Hispanic Civic Engagement Project
MORE2
National Civic League*
One KC Voice
PolicyLink*
Urban League

Business and Development Partners:
Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Home Builders Association
Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute*
Urban Land Institute**

Housing Partners:
Local Initiative Support Corporation**
Kansas City, Mo., Housing Authority
NeighborWorks**

University Partners:
University of Missouri–Kansas City
University of Kansas
Kansas State University
Kansas City Design Center

Professional Organization Partners:
American Planning Association Kansas City Chapter
American Public Works Association**
4A Collaborative

Nonprofit Partners:
Bridging the Gap
Community-Wide Information Network (CWIN)
KC Healthy Kids
KCPT Public Television
Metropolitan Arts Council
Metropolitan Energy Center
Nonprofit Connect
Rosedale Development Association

* National organization
** National organization and local affiliate
Consortium Coordinating Committee

The work of the Creating Sustainable Places initiative is led by a Consortium Coordinating Committee. The committee, initially formed by the MARC Board of Directors in March 2011, will form workgroups as needed for specific tasks, and will host a Partner Congress once or twice each year to keep all partners informed and engaged in the process.

Co-Chairs:
Jan Marcason, Councilmember, City of Kansas City, Mo.
Curt Skoog, Councilmember, City of Overland Park, Kan.

Invited Members:
Lawrence Andre, Councilmember, City of Mission, Kan.
Bob Berkebile, Founding Principal, BNIM Architects
Owen Buckley, President, Lane4 Property Group
Devan Case, Founder and Principal, Pendulum Studio
Cindy Circo, Councilmember, City of Kansas City, Mo.
Jennifer Clark, Community Development Director, City of Independence, Mo.
John Fierro, Executive Director, Mattie Rhodes Counseling & Art Center
Michael Frisch, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design, University of Missouri–Kansas City
Carol Gonzales, City Manager, City of Shawnee, Kan.
Leonard Graham, President, Taliaferro & Browne, Inc.
Vacant, Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Jim Harpool, Director of Development, MD Management
John Harvey, President, City Vision
James Joerke, Sustainability Director, Johnson County, Kan.
Doug Johnson, Interim Director of Planning and Development Services, City of Overland Park, Kan.
Jeff Joseph, Planning and Zoning Director, Leavenworth County, Kan.
Gretchen Kunkel, President, KC Healthy Kids
Ed Lowndes, Executive Director, KC Housing Authority
Mary Lim-Lampe, Executive Director, MORE2
Tim Locher, Project Manager, Forest City Land Group
Wendell Maddox, President, United Way of Wyandotte County
Margaret May, Executive Director, Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council
Sandy Mayer, Special Projects Coordinator, Jackson County, Mo.
Robb McKim, Vice President, PGAV Architects & Planners, ULI Kansas City District Council
Brad Munford, Planner, Unified Government of Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kan.
Julie Porter, Executive Director, Greater Kansas City Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)
Bernardo Ramirez, Executive Director, Hispanic Economic Development Corporation
Mark Randall, City Administrator, City of Pleasant Hill, Mo.
Randy Rhoads, Mayor, City of Lee’s Summit, Mo.
Stephanie Rolley, Professor/Head, Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional and Community Planning, Kansas State University
Susan Sherman, Assistant City Manager, City of Olathe, Kan.
Scott Wingerson, Assistant City Manager, City of Gladstone, Mo.
John Wood, Assistant City Manager for Neighborhoods, City of Kansas City, Mo.

Policy Board Liaisons:
Ed Ford, Councilmember, City of Kansas City, Mo., and Co-Chair, Total Transportation Policy Committee
Marge Vogt, Councilmember, City of Olathe, Kan., and Co-Chair, Total Transportation Policy Committee
Ed Peterson, Commissioner, Johnson County, Kan., and Co-Chair, Air Quality Forum
Kathy Dusenbery, Commissioner, Platte County, Mo., and Co-Chair, Air Quality Forum
Officer:
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Mayor Greg Canuteson, Liberty

Jackson County, Missouri
County Executive Mike Sanders
Legislator Scott Burnett
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Mayor Laura McConwell, Mission

Leavenworth County, Kansas
Commissioner John Flower
Commissioner Bob Holland

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Platte County, Missouri
Presiding Commissioner Jason Brown
Commissioner Kathy Dusenbery

Ray County, Missouri
Presiding Commissioner Bob King

Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas
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Commissioner Tom Cooley
Commissioner Nathan Barnes
Mayor Clausie W. Smith, Bonner Springs

Independence, Missouri
Mayor Don Reimal
Councilmember Jim Schultz

Kansas City, Missouri
Mayor Sly James
Councilmember Ed Ford
Councilmember Jan Marcason

Lee’s Summit, Missouri
Mayor Randy Rhoads

Olathe, Kansas
Mayor Michael Copeland
Councilmember Marge Vogt
(Mayor’s Representative)

Overland Park, Kansas
Mayor Carl Gerlach
Councilmember Donna Owens
(Mayor’s Representative)
Councilmember Curt Skoog
MARC Staff Contacts

As the lead applicant for the Sustainable Communities grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development that funds the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, the Mid-America Regional Council provides staff support and grant administration services. Key contacts are listed below for MARC’s internal Creating Sustainable Places team.

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