



# Planning Sustainable Places

ADVANCING A SUSTAINABLE REGION PLACE BY PLACE

## SUBMISSIONS GUIDEBOOK

2027 CALL FOR PLANNING STUDIES

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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## A. About the Planning Sustainable Places Program

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, [Creating Sustainable Places](#).

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.

The 2013 Planning Sustainable Places Program (PSP) combined funds dedicated to the demonstration projects component of Creating Sustainable Places and the Livable Communities Surface Transportation/Bridge Program awards to provide local governments with financial support to advance detailed local planning and project development activities.

In the subsequent funding cycles, the program has been funded solely through the Surface Transportation Program and funding was only available to jurisdictions and other government entities within the nine county MARC metropolitan planning organization boundary. The number of applicants and funded projects for the 2015 to 2025 funding cycles were as follows:

Funding Cycle	Number of Applicants	Number of Funded Studies
2015	27	13
2017	37	25
2019	23	12
2021	30	14
2023	29	18
2025	20	17

The Creating Sustainable Places Initiative and the region's long-range plan, Connected KC 2050, (learn more about [Connected KC 2050](#)), outline a need to focus efforts on promoting concepts consistent with sustainable communities and place a focus on advancing site specific and project specific activities in support of these objectives. Projects awarded funding will be consistent with those goals.

Additionally, projects should address creating vibrant communities that serve the needs of individuals of all ages and abilities.

The 2027 Planning Sustainable Places program will continue to serve as a single local government assistance program intended to specifically respond to these goals and facilitate the following objectives:



## Program Objectives:

- Support the development and implementation of local activity center plans consistent with Creating Sustainable Places principles, identified regional activity centers, and the land use policy direction outlined in the long-range transportation plan, learn more about [Connected KC 2050](#).
- Support localized public engagement and community consensus building.
- Support the identification and conceptualization of land use strategies, transportation projects, and related sustainable development initiatives that help to realize and advance the objectives identified in the Creating Sustainable Places initiative, *Connected KC 2050*, and the MARC Board's adopted policy statement on regional land use direction.
- Support the conceptualization, development, and implementation of Creating Sustainable Places projects.

## B. Call for PSP Projects

As funding of the program is limited, MARC and the Sustainable Places Policy Committee will conduct a regional solicitation and call for applications. The solicitation details and related application deadlines are outlined below.

- **Application website:** Visit the [Planning Sustainable Places Application portal](#)
- **Application opening:** May 4, 2026
- **Application deadline:** June 22, 2026 at 4 p.m. CDT

## II. AVAILABLE FUNDING

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The Planning Sustainable Places program utilizes funding and programming of Transportation Program (STP) awards.

### **\$1,300,000 – Available Funding**

- **\$500,000 – Missouri STP – FFY 2026**
- **\$800,000 – Kansas STP – FFY 2027**

### **Local Match**

The Planning Sustainable Places program requires a **minimum non-federal cash match of 20 percent**. Applications with a higher local match percentage will receive additional consideration during the project selection process.

### **Maximum Funding to be Awarded per Project**

The maximum available Planning Sustainable Places federal funds award per study is \$150,000. There is no minimum award, nor is there a minimum or maximum total project budget size.

### **Transportation Fees**

MARC will collect a project fee of 1.0% of federal funds awarded to any project selected through a MARC transportation project selection/programming process. The non-refundable fee is charged to the project sponsor.



### III. CALL FOR STUDIES SCHEDULE

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The schedule for the Planning Sustainable Places call for studies is described in the following table. The [Planning Sustainable Places Application portal](#) will open May 4, 2026. All projects must be submitted via the online database. **The deadline to submit applications is June 22, 2026 at 4 p.m. Central Daylight Savings Time (CDT).**

Date	Activity
May 4, 2026	Call for studies begins
May 20, 2026	Call for studies pre-application workshop at 2 p.m. (Hybrid)
June 22, 2026	Application submission deadline at 4 p.m. CDT
July 1, 2026	Application submission public comment period opens
July 22, 2026	Application submission public comment period closes
June–July 2026	MARC staff technical analysis and scoring
Aug.–Sept. 2026	Sustainable Places Policy Committee evaluation and prioritization
Sept. 2026	MARC Total Transportation Policy Committee and MARC Board adoption

### IV. ELIGIBILITY

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#### Eligible Applicants

Jurisdictions (cities, counties and states) and transportation agencies located within MARC’s metropolitan planning boundary — Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri — may apply for consideration.

Non-profit and other non-governmental organizations are encouraged to partner with a jurisdiction, transportation agency or other government entity but they may not participate in the PSP process as a project sponsor.

#### Eligible Locations

Areas within the MARC metropolitan planning organization boundary are eligible, but an emphasis will be placed on identified activity centers within our defined [redevelopment area](#). The MARC redevelopment area is a representation of the 1990 urbanized area which contains: 1) 1990 Census tracts with a minimum of 1,000 population or employment per square mile; and 2) 2010 blocks at least 30% developed in 1990, within the 2010 urban area. Any land change resulting in an increase in population or employment is defined as redevelopment in the long-range forecast. The selection of projects will be prioritized around areas that show a “confluence of opportunities,” areas that include multiple development opportunities that support regional goals.



## V. STUDY CATEGORIES

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The Planning Sustainable Places Program will consider studies in two categories:

Category A – Sustainable Places Plans

Category B – Project Development

All study proposals regardless of category will be required to comply with federal transportation funding eligibility guidelines. Learn more about the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#).

Previous study details can be viewed in an interactive online map, visit the [Planning Sustainable Places Project Explorer](#) to view the studies.

### A. Sustainable Places Plans

**Intent:** This first level of planning in the Planning Sustainable Places program focuses on looking at the big picture and crafting a vision that integrates transportation, land use and the environment and identifies project need. The study must meaningfully engage the community in a collaborative dialogue. This will be accomplished through the required localized public engagement process that engages multiple audiences (i.e. neighborhoods, businesses, historical society, community organizations); incorporates a variety of communication platforms; and utilizes a collaborative design process which is cyclical and tests, analyzes, and refines the design in response to citizen engagement.

**Pre-requisites:**

Vision of Future Vibrancy

**Required Project Element:**

Robust Public Engagement Process

**Required Deliverables:** Implementation Plan Detailing Project Timeline

**Possible Elements:**

- New and/or revised land use strategies
- Transportation demand-reduction measures
- Internal mobility enhancements – traffic calming, pedestrian, transit, and/or bicycle circulation, safety and security for all modes
- Continuity of local streets in community
- Need/identification of future transit
- Connectivity of transportation to other centers
- Public and private investment and implementation strategy
- Assembly of Walk-friendly Community applications
- Public information plan for implementation
- Typical cross-sections based on typical ROW, not site measured specifics
- Rough cost estimates for fitting in ROW but not design
- Identification of if ROW is needed but not specific details; identify critical issues of project



## B. Project Development

**Important Note:** Funding is available to support Project Development for locations that have previously developed local plans for the study area in question, and have already developed the core plan elements outlined for a Sustainable Places Plan. Demonstration of these previous efforts will be necessary to be eligible to receive Project Development funding.

**Intent:** This level of planning in the Planning Sustainable Places program focuses on drilling down into a Sustainable Places type of plan. The Sustainable Places Plan does not have to be the result of a Sustainable Places Plan through MARC. Communities that have completed work that meets the criteria of a Sustainable Places Plan are encouraged to utilize the Planning Sustainable Places Project Development opportunity to further develop their big picture plans to integrate project needs and concepts. This level DOES NOT include PS&E (plans, specifications and estimates) nor would it include survey work.

### **Pre-requisites:**

- Vision of Future Vibrancy
- Timeline
- Elements developed in Sustainable Places Plan or equivalent

### **Required Project Element:**

- Robust Public Engagement Process

**Required Deliverables:** Detailed Plan Including a Budget (Sources & Uses) Document It may also include Sketch plans; renderings; memorandum/report of recommendations for environmental and design studies necessary to move to more project-specific detail

### **Possible Elements:**

- Transportation project feasibility analysis
- Parking facility or management plan
- Bicycle/pedestrian project plan
- Transit project or facility plan
- Multi-modal corridor plans
- Green and complete streets
- Environmental mitigation plan or restoration plan
- Design guidelines
- Public information plan for implementation
- Typical cross-sections based on typical ROW, not site measured specifics
- Rough cost estimates for fitting in ROW but not design
- Finish Recommended Plan with deliverable as memorandum or report
- Identification of if ROW is needed but not specific details; identify critical issues of project
- Plan should address the final state for a long-term reality, i.e. moving from 2 lane to future arterial
- Outline how ROW will increase if planning for trail system
- Does not include National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process
- Alignment Studies



## VI. EVALUATION CRITERIA

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Applications requesting Planning Sustainable Places funding will be evaluated by the following criteria: Also refer to Section XI of this guidebook for additional details and guidance.

### Sustainable Places Plan Criteria

#### Intent Category – 38 points maximum

##### **Question: 4.1 The study promotes improved travel choices (e.g. bicycling, walking, etc.)**

Response: Study does not promote improved travel choices – 0 points  
Study promotes improved travel choices without clear applicant description – 3 points  
Application clearly describes how study promotes improved travel choices – 6 points

##### **Question: 4.2 Describe how the study advances improved public health.**

Response: Study does not advance improved public health – 0 points  
Study advances improved public health without clear applicant description – 3 points  
Application clearly describes how study advances improved public health – 5 points

##### **Question: 4.3 Describe how the study supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure.**

Response: Study does not support investment in areas with existing infrastructure – 0 points  
Study supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure without clear applicant description – 1 point  
Application clearly describes how study supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure – 2 points  
Application clearly describes how study supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure and explains how the condition of the existing infrastructure has been assessed – 5 points

##### **Question: 4.4 Describe how the study promotes resiliency and adaptability (physical and/or economic).**

Response: Study does not promote resiliency and adaptability – 0 points  
Study clearly explains how the study promotes resiliency and adaptability – 6 points

##### **Question: 4.5 Describe how the study includes innovation in concept generation and public engagement.**

Response: Study does not include innovation – 0 points  
Study clearly describes how study includes innovation – 3 points

#### Location Category – 52 points maximum

##### **Question: 2.1 Destinations contribute to the vibrancy and attraction of a place. Please tell us about any priority destinations that are to be connected.**

Response: There isn't at least 1 block in the lowest density tier for any destination type – 0 points



At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 1 destination type– 1 point  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 2 or more destination types OR at least 1 block in the second density tier for 1 destination type – 2 points  
At least 1 block in the second density tier for 2 or more destination types OR at least 1 block in the middle density tier for 1 destination type – 3 points  
At least 1 block in the middle density tier or higher for 2 or more destination types OR at least 1 block in the top two density tiers for a single destination type – 4 points

**Question: 2.2 Priority Industry Sectors contribute to the economic well-being of a place and the region. What is in your proposed scope to connect the priority industry sectors in your study area? Please tell us about any priority industry sectors that are to be connected.**

Response: There isn't at least 1 block in the lowest density tier for any priority industry sector– 0 points  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 1 priority industry sector– 1 point  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 2 or more priority industry sectors OR at least 1 block in the second density tier for 1 priority industry sector – 2 points  
At least 1 block in the second density tier for 2 or more priority industry sectors OR at least 1 block in the middle density tier for 1 priority industry sector – 3 points  
At least 1 block in the middle density tier or higher for 2 or more priority industry sectors OR at least 1 block in the top two density tiers for a priority industry sector – 4 points

**Question: 2.4 The mix of land use types contributes to the vibrancy of a place. (Points are cumulative).**

Response: Less than half the blocks in the study area have at least two or more land use types – 0 points  
The future land use map incorporates mixed use zoning in the study area – 1 point  
The proposed study scope includes an examination of land use in the study area – 3 points  
Half the block groups in the study area have at least 2 or more land use types – 3 points

**Question: 2.5 Housing choice is facilitated by a mix of housing land use types. (Points are cumulative)**

Response: Less than half the blocks in the study area have at least 2 or more housing land use types – 0 points  
The proposed study scope includes an examination of housing land use in the study area – 3 points  
Half the block groups in the study area have at least 2 or more housing land use types – 3 points

**Question: 2.6 Impervious surface can adversely affect infrastructure, water volumes, water quality and contributes to heat islands. (Points are cumulative)**



Response: Less than half the blocks in the study area have at least 40% impervious surface – 0 points  
The proposed study scope explores potential solutions to address impervious surface, heat islands, or environmental stewardship solutions in the study area – 3 points  
At least half the block groups in the study area have at least 40% impervious surface – 1 point  
At least half the block groups in the study area have at least 60% impervious surface – 2 points

**Question: 5.1-2 Does the study serve MARC’s defined redevelopment area?**

Response: Study area is not within the defined redevelopment area– 0 points  
Study area is within the defined redevelopment area – 5 points  
Study area is within the defined redevelopment area and has declined in population and/or employment – 10 points

**Question: 5.3-4 Is the study area located in an activity center identified on MARC’s map of activity centers?**

Response: Study area is not within an activity center on MARC’s map of activity centers– 0 points  
Study area is within any activity center – 1 point  
Study area is within a center of medium intensity of activity AND sponsor clearly and objectively documents how the activity has increased in intensity and walkability to warrant a higher intensity status – 3 points  
Study area is within a center of high or very high intensity of activity AND/OR implements elements and recommendations of Planning Sustainable Places or corridor demonstration projects from Creating Sustainable Places initiatives AND/OR applicant clearly and objectively documents how the activity has increased in intensity and walkability to warrant a higher intensity status – 5 points

**Question: 5.5-6 Does the study serve a current or future transit corridor, mobility hub (Smart Moves KC) or a local transit service?**

Response: Study area is not within a Smart Moves KC transit corridor or mobility hub, nor does it have local transit service– 0 points  
Applicant describes how the study area would be served by a future Smart Moves KC transit corridor or mobility hub, or future local service – 2 points  
Applicant describes how the study area is served by a current Smart Moves KC transit corridor or mobility hub, or current local service – 5 points

**Question: 5.7-8 Does the study serve area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities or does the study provide connections to area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities with opportunities (i.e., jobs access, education, reduce health disparities, etc.)?**

Response: Study area is not within nor connects an area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities (APPHDC) and doesn’t have a hidden population – 0 points  
Study area is within or connects an APPHDC, has documented hidden population or connects APPHDC to opportunities – 2 points



Study area is within an APPHDC, has documented a hidden population or connects APPHDC to opportunities and clearly describes how it addresses existing adverse health, social and environmental effects – 5 points

### **Partnership Category – 10 points maximum**

**Question: 6.1 Describe the partnerships formed to develop the study and the manner in which these partnerships will benefit the project.**

Response: Study does not document study partnership – 0 points  
Applicant document study coordination – 2 points  
Applicant documents study coordination within applicant entity **AND** partnership with entities outside applicant entity – 5 points

**Question: 6.2 Describe if the study demonstrates sustained involvement with community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders.**

Response: Study does not demonstrate involvement of community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders – 0 points  
Community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders support the study (i.e. provide support letter) – 2 points  
Community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders are participants and are committed to the study (i.e. will serve on steering committee) – 3 points  
Community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders are participants, are committed to the project, and have committed resources to the study (i.e. staff time, meeting space) – 5 points

### **Implementation Category – 13 points maximum**

**Question: 1.9 The study commits a non-federal match of greater than 20% (the minimum required).**

Response: Study commits minimum non-federal match – 0 points  
Study commits non-federal match of 25% - 49.9% – 2 points  
Study commits non-federal match of 50% or greater – 3 points

**Question: 6.3 The study has taken steps toward implementation. (Points are cumulative)**

Response: The study does not demonstrate commitment to implementation – 0 points  
The application includes a letter from the mayor – 2 points  
The study is in a community that has achieved Gold Community for All Ages recognition – 2 points  
The study demonstrates how results of public engagement have been used in the community – 2 points  
The study area has approvals in place (i.e. rezoning, commission approvals, or other administrative approvals; entitlements are in place) – 4 points

## **Project Development Criteria**

### **Intent Category – 17 points maximum**

**Question: 4.1 The study promotes improved travel choices (e.g. bicycling, walking, etc.)**



Response: Study does not promote improved travel choices – 0 points  
Study promotes improved travel choices without clear applicant description – 2 points  
Application clearly describes how study promotes improved travel choices – 4 points

**Question: 4.2 Describe how the study advances improved public health.**

Response: Study does not advance improved public health – 0 points  
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Application clearly describes how study supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure – 2 points  
Application clearly describes how study supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure and explains how the condition of the existing infrastructure has been assessed – 3 points

**Question: 4.4 Describe how the study promotes resiliency and adaptability (physical and/or economic).**

Response: Study does not promote resiliency – 0 points  
Study clearly explains how the study promotes resiliency – 3 points

**Question: 4.5 Describe how the study includes innovation in concept generation and public engagement.**

Response: Study does not include innovation – 0 points  
Study clearly describes how study includes innovation – 3 points

**Location Category – 40 points maximum**

**Question: 2.1 Destinations contribute to the vibrancy and attraction of a place. Please tell us about any priority destinations that are to be connected.**

Response: There isn't at least 1 block in the lowest density tier for any destination type – 0 points  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 1 destination type – 1 point  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 2 or more destination types OR at least 1 block in the second density tier for 1 destination type – 2 points  
At least 1 block in the second density tier for 2 or more destination types OR at least 1 block in the middle density tier for 1 destination type – 3 points  
At least 1 block in the middle density tier or higher for 2 or more destination types OR at least 1 block in the top two density tiers for a single destination type – 4 points



**Question: 2.2 Priority Industry Sectors contribute to the economic well-being of a place and the region. What is in your proposed scope to connect the priority industry sectors in your study area? Please tell us about any priority industry sectors that are to be connected.**

Response: There isn't at least 1 block in the lowest density tier for any priority industry sector– 0 points  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 1 priority industry sector– 1 point  
At least 1 block in the lowest density tier for 2 or more priority industry sectors OR at least 1 block in the second density tier for 1 priority industry sector – 2 points  
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**Question: 2.4 The mix of land use types contributes to the vibrancy of a place. (Points are cumulative).**

Response: Less than half the blocks in the study area have at least two or more land use types – 0 points  
The proposed study scope includes an examination of land use in the study area – 2 points  
Half the block groups in the study area have at least 2 or more land use types – 3 points

**Question: 2.5 Housing choice is facilitated by a mix of housing land use types. (Points are cumulative)**

Response: Less than half the blocks in the study area have at least 2 or more housing land use types – 0 points  
The proposed study scope includes an examination of housing land use in the study area – 2 points  
Half the block groups in the study area have at least 2 or more housing land use types – 2 points

**Question: 2.6 Impervious surface can adversely affect infrastructure, water volumes, water quality and contributes to heat islands. (Points are cumulative)**

Response: Less than half the blocks in the study area have at least 40% impervious surface – 0 points  
The proposed study scope explores potential solutions to address impervious surface, heat islands, or environmental stewardship solutions in the study area – 2 points  
At least half the block groups in the study area have at least 40% impervious surface – 1 point  
At least half the block groups in the study area have at least 60% impervious surface – 1 point

**Question: 5.1-2 Does the study serve MARC's defined redevelopment area?**

Response: Study area is not within the defined redevelopment area– 0 points



Study area is within the defined redevelopment area – 2 points  
Study area is within the defined redevelopment area and has declined in population and/or employment – 5 points

**Question: 5.3-4 Is the study area located in an activity center identified on MARC’s map of activity centers?**

Response: Study area is not within an activity center on MARC’s map of activity centers– 0 points  
Study area is within any activity center – 1 point  
Study area is within a center of medium intensity of activity AND sponsor clearly and objectively documents how the activity has increased in intensity and walkability to warrant a higher intensity status – 3 points  
Study area is within a center of high or very high intensity of activity AND/OR implements elements and recommendations of Planning Sustainable Places or corridor demonstration projects from Creating Sustainable Places initiatives AND/OR applicant clearly and objectively documents how the activity has increased in intensity and walkability to warrant a higher intensity status – 5 points

**Question: 5.5-6 Does the study serve a current or future transit corridor, mobility hub (Smart Moves KC) or a local transit service?**

Response: Study area is not within a Smart Moves KC transit corridor or mobility hub, nor does it have local transit service– 0 points  
Applicant describes how the study area would be served by a future Smart Moves KC transit corridor or mobility hub, or future local service – 2 points  
Applicant describes how the study area is served by a current Smart Moves KC transit corridor or mobility hub, or current local service – 5 points

**Question: 5.7-8 Does the study serve area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities or does the study provide connections to area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities with opportunities (i.e., jobs access, education, reduce health disparities, etc.)?**

Response: Study area is not within nor connects an area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities (APPHDC) and doesn’t have a hidden population – 0 points  
Study area is within or connects an APPHDC, has documented hidden population or connects APPHDC to opportunities – 2 points  
Study area is within an APPHDC, has documented a hidden population or connects APPHDC to opportunities and clearly describes how it addresses existing adverse health, social and environmental effects – 5 points

**Partnership Category – 20 points maximum**

**Question: 6.1 Describe the partnerships formed to develop the study and the manner in which these partnerships will benefit the project.**

Response: Study does not document study partnership – 0 points  
Applicant document study coordination – 5 points  
Applicant documents study coordination within applicant entity AND partnership with entities outside applicant entity – 10 points



**Question: 6.2 Describe if the study demonstrates sustained involvement with community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders.**

Response: Study does not demonstrate involvement of community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders– 0 points  
Community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders support the study (i.e. provide support letter) – 2 points  
Community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders are participants and are committed to the study (i.e. will serve on steering committee) – 6 points  
Community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders are participants, are committed to the project, and have committed resources to the study (i.e. staff time, meeting space) – 10 points

**Implementation Category – 22 points maximum**

**Question: 1.9 The study commits a non-federal match of greater than 20% (the minimum required).**

Response: Study commits minimum non-federal match – 0 points  
Study commits non-federal match of 25% - 49.9% – 1 point  
Study commits non-federal match of 50% or greater – 2 points

**Question: 3.8 For Project Development [Level 2], the Planning Sustainable Places program looks to further those plans that advance implementation. Please provide the project’s timeline for implementation. The applicant demonstrates a commitment towards implementation.**

Response: Applicant does not demonstrate past success– 0 points  
Applicant clearly explains what previous planning the study builds upon – 10 points

**Question: 6.3 The study has taken steps toward implementation. (Points are cumulative)**

Response: The study does not demonstrate commitment to implementation – 0 points  
The application includes a letter from the mayor – 2 points  
The study is in a community that has achieved Gold Community for All Ages recognition – 2 points  
The study demonstrates how results of public engagement have been used in the community – 2 points  
The study area has approvals in place (i.e. rezoning, commission approvals, or other administrative approvals; entitlements are in place) – 4 points

## **VII. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION PROCESS**

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Once the call for projects closes on June 22, 2026, MARC staff will conduct initial technical analysis for submissions in each project category. Projects will be scored based on how well they meet solicitation criteria and support the program goals. These scores will serve as one tool to help evaluate submissions.

Following staff analysis, the projects will be evaluated by the Sustainable Places Policy Committee, comprised of elected officials, local planners, community leaders and developers to name a few, in the Kansas City area.



The Sustainable Places Policy Committee will build on information and scores provided, and identify gaps, assess priorities and propose a recommended list of projects for funding through the Planning Sustainable Places program for MARC’s Total Transportation Policy Committee and MARC’s Board of Directors to approve.

## VIII. PRE-APPLICATION WORKSHOP AND OFFICE HOURS

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### Pre-Application Workshop

May 20, 2026, 2 p.m.

Mid-America Regional Council

MARC Board Room or Zoom

600 Broadway Suite 200, Kansas City, MO 64105

#### [Register for the Pre-application workshop](#)

MARC will host a call for studies webinar on May 20, 2026, at 2 p.m. to explain the study nomination and evaluation process, walk through the application portal and allow time for questions. Attendance at the call for studies workshop is not required to nominate studies, but the session should help participants develop stronger applications. This webinar will be recorded and posted to the Pre-application workshop section of the program web page. Additionally, a PDF copy of the presentation slides will be posted to the pre-application section.

Topics covered at the workshop will include:

- Timeline for developing and submitting applications
- MARC available planning resources (PSP Atlas, other info/tools)
- Overview of program objectives
- Eligible project types and examples
- How nominated projects will be evaluated and prioritized
- Demonstration of online submission form and mapping resources
- Question and answer session for participants

Questions about the workshop? Contact Beth Dawson at 816-701-8325 or [email](#).

### 2027 Office Hours

As an added opportunity for prospective sponsors, we will be offering three different office hour sessions. The sessions make staff available to answer questions and provide feedback on applications. To participate in a session, you will need to register for one of the Teams sessions.

Date	Time	Registration link
May 13, 2026	10 a.m.	<a href="#">Session Three — Register</a>
May 28, 2026	4 p.m.	<a href="#">Session Two — Register</a>
June 10, 2026	2 p.m.	<a href="#">Session Three — Register</a>



## IX. SUBMISSION DATABASE

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### A. Create an Account

Visit the [application portal](#).

If you are a new user of the portal, you will need to create a new account. After acknowledging the need to create an account, the sign in page allows you to either create a new account or sign in with an existing account. If you are creating a new account, fill in the requested information to create a unique account. Multiple people from the same jurisdiction or agency can set up individual accounts.

### B. Add a Project

Log in to the database and click on “Start New Application” to add a new project. A blank submission form will open. You can incrementally add information about a project during multiple sessions, and the information will not be visible to the public. Please be aware that one of the initial screening questions for your application will ask about the project match amount. **If your Non-federal Cash Match, question 1.9, is less than 20% of the total, the system will not allow you to submit your application.**

If the session is about to time out due to inactivity, the project information **will** automatically be saved. But project information **will not** automatically be saved if a user closes their Internet browser without clicking on “Save.”

All projects will be posted online for public review and comment after the submission deadline.

### C. Revise a Project

Each time you log into the database, you will see a list of projects you have submitted or are working on. You can update information on an existing project or add a new one.

You can make changes to projects until the database closes at 4 p.m. CDT on June 22, 2026.

### D. Delete a Project

To delete a project application, log in to the database and click on the “Delete” button next to the selected study in your list of projects on the main administration page.

### E. Report Issue

If you run into any issues with the application portal, please click on the “Report Issue” button and fill out the form detailing the issue that you are experiencing. If you could please provide a screenshot of the issue, that would be helpful.

If you need assistance with the submission database, contact Beth Dawson at 816-701-8325 or [email](#).



## X. RESOURCE MAPS

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MARC has created an online mapping application that provides relevant information to project sponsors. The map can be used to view the proximity of nominated projects to important regional assets, like MetroGreen®, corridors and activity centers.

Visit the [Planning Sustainable Places Atlas](#) to see multiple map overlays at a time, click on features to get more information about them, and make simple measurements.

### Layers in the PSP Atlas:

- Mobility Services
  - Transit Routes
  - Mobility Hubs
  - Smart Moves KC
  - Streetcar
  - Bikeways and Trails
  - Sidewalks
- Industry Sectors
  - Global Design
  - Energy
  - Transportation Logistics Wholesale
  - Advanced Manufacturing
- Destinations
  - Community
  - Consumption
  - Institutional
  - Tourism and Recreation
- MetroGreen Corridors
- Regional Bike Plan
- Planning Sustainable Places (PSP) Projects
- Congestion Management Network
- Freight Activity Areas
- Creating Sustainable Places Corridors
- Functional Classification
- Activity Centers
- Areas of Persistent Poverty
- Jobs by Block
- Land Use Variety
- Housing Variety
- Population by Block
- Redevelopment Area
- Percent Impervious by Block
- MARC MPO Boundary
- Cities
- Counties

Visit the [Planning Sustainable Places Atlas](#) to access the map viewer. When accessing the Atlas, select “Layers” in the upper left to view the various layers provided in the map. The layers can then be toggled on and off for viewing.



## XI. CONTACT INFO

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For assistance with the online submission form, data and resources, or for questions about eligible projects, please contact Beth Dawson at [bdawson@marc.org](mailto:bdawson@marc.org). We will also post answers to frequently asked questions at the [Call for Projects page](#).

Mid-America Regional Council  
600 Broadway, Suite 200, Kansas City, MO 64105-1659  
Phone: 816/474-4240

## XII. APPLICATION FORM SAMPLE

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A sample of the study application form is listed in this section with explanations to help project sponsors answer questions and understand staff considerations during scoring, which is one piece of the evaluation. All projects must be submitted by means of the online application form. **The deadline to propose studies is 4 p.m. CDT on June 22, 2026.**

Before beginning the application, the portal will ask for the Project Name.

### **Application Page 1**

#### **General Information**

1.1 You must classify your project into one category. Select your category from the following list:

- Sustainable Places Plan
- Project Development

EXPLANATION: The selection of a project category will determine which questions you will see at different points in the application portal. Questions that are not black and reference Project Development [Level 2] are specifically tied to which category you selected. If a question isn't black and active, a response is not required.

1.2 Organization Type:

1.3 Organization Name:

1.4 Project location (city, county, and general boundaries if site-specific plan):

1.5 Project Scope: Please provide an outline that includes activities to be carried out and expected deliverables

#### **Project Financial Information**

Please note: Sponsors that do not provide at least 20 percent cash match will not be allowed to submit their application. If a project is not scalable, it will not be penalized.

1.6 Total Cost



1.7 Federal Amount. The request cannot exceed \$150,000.

1.8 Minimum Funding Amount

1.9 Non-federal Cash Match **Must be at least 20% of Question 1.6 above.**

1.10 Source of local match:

EXPLANATION: Projects that do not provide at least 20 percent non-federal cash match of the total project budget are not eligible for this program. For example, a federal funds request of \$100,000 would require a non-federal cash match of \$25,000 for a total project budget of \$125,000.

1.11 Is the project scalable?

1.12 If Yes, how would the scope be changed?

## **Application Page 2**

### **Sustainable Places Characteristics**

**There are characteristics that contribute to the success of a Sustainable Place. The "Planning Sustainable Places" Map below provides layers of these characteristics so that we can understand your study area's strengths and opportunities. It also helps us understand which characteristics you intend to address in your proposed Planning Sustainable Places project's scope of work.**

You can create your project's study area by selecting standard geographies such as County or City, or you can draw a customized study area with a set of Drawing Tools.

Please draw the boundaries of your proposed project's study area or select a predefined geography such as a city or county. *Be sure to click the "Save Map" button at the top left corner of the map window.*

**Next, to help us better understand the context of the project that you are proposing, we are asking the following questions. The questions ask about characteristics that contribute to the success of a Sustainable Place. Each of the questions are associated with a layer or layers in the above map where you drew your study area. You may wish to click on the "Show Layers" item to show the list of the layers included.**

### **Destinations**

There are four layers that illuminate the density of destinations in your study area. All of the destination layers are based on the number of businesses within each block but calculated on a per square mile basis. The layers are:



Select the Community layer to view the density of civic organizations, cultural organizations, religious organizations, and libraries by block in your study area.

Select the Consumption layer to view the density of retail businesses, restaurants, and services by block in your study area.

Select the Institutional layer to view the density of educational institutions, hospitals, courthouses, and city halls by block in your study area.

Select Tourism and Recreation layer to view the density of parks and natural amenities, historic sites, arts organizations and institutions, sports venues, and hotels by block in your study area.

2.1 Destinations contribute to the vibrancy and attraction of a place. What is in your proposed scope to connect the above destinations in your study area? Please tell us about any priority destinations that are to be connected.

### **Priority Industry Sectors**

There are four groups of industry sectors that disproportionately drive our regional economy. There are four layers that illuminate the density of these sectors in your study area. All the priority industry sector layers are based on the number of businesses within each Census Block but calculated on a per square mile basis. The layers are:

Select the Advanced Manufacturing layer to view the density of businesses in this category by block in your study area.

Select the Global Design layer to view the density of businesses in this category by block in your study area.

Select the Energy layer to view the density of businesses in this category by block in your study area.

Select the Transportation, Logistics and Wholesale layer to view the density of businesses in this category by block in your study area.

EXPLANATION: The four groups of industry sectors are defined as follows:

Advanced Manufacturing: Paper, printing and related support activities; chemical manufacturing; machinery manufacturing; computer and electronic product manufacturing; electrical equipment, appliance, and component manufacturing; transportation equipment manufacturing; medical equipment and supplies manufacturing; research and development in biotechnology (except nanobiotechnology); research and development in the physical, engineering, and life sciences (except nanotechnology and biotechnology); and medical laboratories.

Global Design: Architectural, engineering and related service; and specialized design services.

Energy: Power generation; electric power transmission, control and distribution; power and communication line and related structure construction, other scientific and technical consulting services; and building inspection services (energy efficiency inspection services).

Transportation, Logistics & Wholesale: Air transportation; rail transportation; inland water transportation; truck transportation; support activities for transportation; warehousing and



storage; merchant wholesalers, durable goods; merchant wholesalers, nondurable goods; and wholesale trade agents and brokers.

2.2 Priority Industry Sectors contribute to the economic well-being of a place and the region. What is in your proposed scope to connect the priority industry sectors in your study area? Please tell us about any priority industry sectors that are to be connected.

**The next six questions ask about characteristics other than destinations. Each question references a particular layer or layers.**

2.3 The scale of a study area is impacted by the presence of people. The layers, Population by Block, and Jobs by Block, show the numbers by block. What is in your proposed scope that addresses the scale of your study area?

2.4 The mix of land use types contributes to the vibrancy of a place. The layer, Land Use Variety by Block, illustrates how many different land use types are found in a block. Please describe how the land use mix in your study area supports sustainable land use which offers a mix of land uses near each other supporting pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders. What in your proposed scope addresses land use mix? If your future land use plan incorporates mixed use zoning, please include that information as well.

2.5 Housing choice is facilitated by a mix of housing land use types. The layer, Housing Variety by Block, illustrates how many housing types are found in a block. What in your proposed scope addresses your study area's housing land use mix?

2.6 Impervious surface can adversely affect infrastructure, water volumes, water quality and contributes to heat islands. The layer, Impervious Surface, illustrates the percentage of impervious surface by block. What in your proposed scope addresses impervious surface and environmental stewardship solutions in your study area?

### **Connections**

There are 6 layers that illuminate types of connections. The layers are:

- Select the Mobility Hubs layer to view mobility hubs.
- Select the Streetcar Stops layer to view streetcar stops.
- Select the Streetcar Route layer to view the streetcar route.
- Select the Sidewalks layer to view sidewalks.
- Select the Transit by Provider layer to view bus routes.
- Select the Bikeways and Trails layer to view bike facilities.

2.7 What is in your proposed scope to address connections in your study area? If connections are missing, tell us about them.



## **Application Page 3**

### 3.1 Project Description

3.2 Is the project consistent with the relevant adopted local comprehensive plan(s)?

3.3 If yes, please describe.

3.4 If submitting a Project Development [Level 2] application that does not build on a previous PSP project, are the following core elements included in plans previously developed for the area or activity center in question?

- a) Localized public engagement process
- b) Integrated land use, transportation and environmental strategies
- c) Timeline

3.5 Describe how this project and its outcomes directly relate to transportation issues.

EXPLANATION: For this round of funding, Planning Sustainable Places uses transportation dollars so work under this program must have a transportation purpose. The project sponsor should describe how the project and expected outcomes relate to transportation issues, including, but not limited to, transit, cycling, walking, etc.

3.6 The Planning Sustainable Places program requires projects to include a robust public engagement component. Please outline this component.

EXPLANATION: A project that includes a robust public engagement component ensures that it engages multiple audiences (i.e. neighborhoods, businesses, historical society, community organizations); incorporates a variety of communication platforms; and utilizes a collaborative design process which is cyclical and tests, analyzes, and refines the design in response to public engagement. The project meaningfully engages the community in a collaborative dialogue.

3.7 One of the dominant goals of the Planning Sustainable places program is to create or enhance vibrant communities. Please explain how this project will enhance future vibrancy. (Visit the [Sustainability Concepts for principles and concepts](#) that contribute to a vibrant community.)

EXPLANATION: A project that results in multiple positive community benefits for compatible businesses and industries, improves recreational opportunities, enhances housing opportunities and generally improves the socioeconomic conditions in the community for enhanced livability.

3.8 For Project Development [Level 2] projects: The Planning Sustainable Places program looks to further those plans that advance implementation. Please provide the project's timeline for implementation.



## **Application Page 4**

**The following questions address a project's Intent.**

4.1 Describe how the project promotes improved travel choices (e.g., bicycling, walking, transit use, transportation demand strategies, etc.) For more information see the sustainability principle of Transportation Choice in the [Sustainable Land Use Resource](#).

EXPLANATION: A project that promotes improved travel choices is one that includes a multimodal transportation system, with facilities for bicycling, walking, transit use and other modes of travel. Transportation demand strategies, such as flextime work schedules, telecommuting and ridesharing would also be considered as part of a suite of travel choices.

4.2 Describe how the project advances improved public health. For more information see the sustainability principle of Healthier Lifestyles in the [Sustainable Land Use Resource](#).

EXPLANATION: A project that advances improved public health is one that incorporates infrastructure that promotes active living, improved access to healthy food and health services, and includes other public health friendly elements.

4.3 Describe how the project supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure. For more information see the sustainability principle of Corridors & Activity Centers or Unique Community Characteristics in the [Sustainable Land Use Resource](#).

EXPLANATION: A project that supports investment in areas with existing infrastructure is one that does not need new infrastructure and is found in an already established area as part of a redevelopment or infill plan.

4.4 Describe how the project promotes resiliency and adaptability (physical and/or economic).

EXPLANATION: A project that promotes resiliency, whether it be physical or economic, fosters a community's ability to adapt to changes and challenges for long-term health and vitality. Examples of resiliency could include strategies to adapt to land use changes in response to industry changes such as the changes occurring within a particular industry sector, strategies to address demographic changes, or strategies that improve recovery after an emergency, mitigation of heat islands or stormwater impacts, adaptive reuse of buildings, support of resiliency hubs, energy conservation, renewable generation or utility resilience. It could involve developing alternatives should the original strategy not flourish as anticipated.

4.5 Describe how the project includes innovation in concept generation and public engagement.



EXPLANATION: Innovation is the use of new technologies, innovative methods or applying existing technology in new ways or implementing in a community where existing policies, regulations or general opinion have previously prevented their use. A project may overcome significant problems, barriers or limitations with a new solution or by creating a solution that is scalable and/or transferable. An example of innovation in public engagement could be the inclusion of professional arts and creatives that utilize social practice to engage and amplify community values.

## **Application Page 5**

The following questions address a project's Location. To see map layers for each of the questions, visit the [Planning Sustainable Places Atlas](#).

5.1 Does this project serve MARC's defined redevelopment area? Click on the Redevelopment Area layer in the Planning Sustainable Places Atlas.

EXPLANATION: Projects outside the MARC metropolitan planning organization boundary are not eligible for this program. Based on the maps provided, please identify if your project is within MARC's redevelopment area. If the answer is yes, please provide a description of how the project serves the area.

5.2 If yes, please describe.

5.3 Is the project located in an activity center identified on MARC's map of activity centers? Click on the Activity Centers layer in the Planning Sustainable Places Atlas.

EXPLANATION: Projects outside the MARC metropolitan planning organization boundary are not eligible for this program. Based on the maps provided, please identify if your project serves an activity center on MARC's map of activity centers. If the answer is yes, please provide a description of how the project serves the center.

5.4 If yes, please describe.

5.5 Does the project serve a current or future transit corridor or mobility hub (Smart Moves KC)? Click on Mobility Services and select the Mobility Hubs or Smart Moves KC layer in the Planning Sustainable Places Atlas. If your community has a locally provided transit service, please provide documentation.

EXPLANATION: Projects outside the MARC metropolitan planning organization boundary are not eligible for this program. If the project serves a current or future transit corridor or mobility hub (Smart Moves KC) please provide a description of how the project serves the corridor or mobility hub. If an area has local transit service, please provide a description of the service.

5.6 If yes, please describe.



5.7 Does the project serve area(s) of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities (APPHDC) or does the project provide connections to APPHDC with opportunities (i.e. jobs access, education, reduce health disparities, etc.)? Click on Areas of Persistent Poverty layer in the Planning Sustainable Places Atlas.

EXPLANATION: Projects outside the MARC metropolitan planning organization boundary are not eligible for this program. MARC incorporates APPHDC into its planning and decision-making process engaging those populations in the transportation decision-making process so as to best determine how improvements in the region's transportation system can best meet their needs, determine whether these populations are subjected to disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, and address and mitigate those effects. Based on the maps provided, please identify if the project serves an APPHDC and/or connects an APPHDC to opportunities. If the answer is yes, please provide a description of how the project serves the APPHDC. For more information about the federal program please visit the [U.S. Department of Transportation's BUILD Location Designation Page](#).

5.8 If yes, please describe.

## **Application Page 6**

**The following questions address a project's Partnerships.**

6.1 Describe the partnerships formed to develop the project and the manner in which these partnerships will benefit the project. In particular, detail project coordination within the sponsor entity and partnership with entities outside the sponsor entity.

EXPLANATION: Externally, partners can take the form of local governments, nonprofit agencies, community foundations, neighborhood organizations, economic development agencies, or other local stakeholders. Internally, partners can be two or more departments working together. Please provide a description of how the partnerships are of benefit and how they further an integrated approach. Please submit a letter of support and commitment from each entity with which you are partnering.

6.2 Describe if the project demonstrates sustained involvement with community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders.

EXPLANATION: Project partners that include community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders (i.e. older adults, special need populations) facilitate a project that fully engages its community. Please document how sustained involvement will be achieved. Examples could include a letter of support from each entity that represents community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders, the inclusion of underrepresented stakeholders on the project steering committee, or commitment of resources to the project by underrepresented stakeholders. This criteria looks to evaluate



how you are partnering with community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders within your process. This is above and beyond any outreach to community and/or typically underrepresented stakeholders.

**The following question addresses a project's steps towards Implementation.**

6.3 Describe local activities that show commitment and ability to carry out the proposed project and support the stated project summary.

EXPLANATION: Examples of local activities include record of complementary projects (e.g., higher-density, mixed-use developments, universal design), previous projects that relate to the project area, project goals that are consistent with the local comprehensive plan, supporting local development controls to allow innovative development. Specific actions that show commitment and ability to complete include: a letter from the mayor; explaining how public engagement feedback has been used; Gold Level Communities for All Ages recognition; rezoning or administrative approval of the project has begun; or entitlements for the project are in place.

## **Application Page 7**

### **Supplemental Information**

Thank you for answering all of the previous questions about your project. If you would like to include additional information, you can upload up to five files. Each file is limited to a maximum of 25 MB. We can only accept the following file types: PDF, JPG, Microsoft Word, and Microsoft Excel. To submit other file types, including any available GIS files for the project, please contact Beth Dawson at 816-701-8325 or [email](#). Examples of supplemental information that previous sponsors have supplied include:

- 1) A project map is not required given the study area drawn on the map on page 2. If desired, you may include a map or maps that provide additional details. Ensure that any map(s) include a scale and north arrow. If claiming future land use in Q2.4 or claiming local transit service in Q5.5, please attach maps to the application.
- 2) Letter from the local government acknowledging commitment to develop the project and provide a non-federal cash match equivalent to at least 20 percent of the total study amount.
- 3) Letter(s) of support from entities with which you are partnering.
- 4) Other supporting documentation such as photos, related study summaries, supporting comprehensive plan policies, etc.

