MARC 2027 FEDERAL ACTION AGENDA

November 2026

OVERVIEW

Guiding principles. MARC's federal agenda is grounded in regional needs and the priorities of its members. MARC engages in a nonpartisan manner, working with members of Congress and administrations of any party, and focuses on program design, funding stability and local decision-making rather than partisan outcomes.

FRAMEWORK

The agenda organizes MARC's federal engagement into three postures so that staff time and Board attention are focused where the regional stakes and opportunities for action are greatest.

- **Proactive:** MARC will actively work to inform policy, funding or administrative outcomes with significant fiscal or regional consequences and a credible opportunity for legislative or executive action.
- **Monitor:** MARC will track a defined set of issues where federal action is reasonably plausible and consequences could be significant, assess impacts and recommend targeted engagement when warranted.
- **Reserve:** MARC will maintain awareness of established interests and engage selectively when federal action has material implications for MARC or the region**.**

Staff flexibility. The actions described in this agenda are initial. Staff will adjust timing, methods and partners as legislative and administrative conditions evolve, consistent with ongoing guidance from the Board.

PROACTIVE PRIORITIES

MARC will actively engage on these priorities where regional stakes are significant and there is a credible opportunity for federal action.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION	
Why it matters	• Reauthorization of the current surface transportation law offers an opportunity to shape the federal programs that guide regional transportation investment. • Metropolitan planning organization responsibilities and locally directed funding help align federal investment with regional mobility, safety and economic priorities.
MARC position	• Support a five-year authorization with predictable funding for highways, public transit, active transportation and other modes. • Preserve and strengthen metropolitan planning organization and local decision-making through formula programs. • Maintain competitive grants accessible to regional organizations and local governments, with streamlined requirements and technical assistance. • Prioritize freight movement, safety and multimodal investments important to the Kansas City region.
Approach to initial actions	• Build relationships with the Kansas City region's congressional delegation and relevant committees, and share MARC's position on key principles for reauthorization. • Follow House and Senate reauthorization proposals as they develop. • Engage U.S. Department of Transportation officials and coordinate with NARC and other partners on messaging and advocacy.
Benefits to the region	• Directs federal investment toward priorities set through the region's transportation planning process.

	• Preserves MARC's role in coordinating transportation planning and programming federal funds. • Supports safe, reliable movement of people and goods and the region's role in freight and logistics.

FEDERAL FUNDING AND GRANT ADMINISTRATION	
Why it matters	• MARC and its partners rely on predictable federal appropriations and grants for multiyear planning, infrastructure and essential services. • Changes in funding levels, the timing of awards and payments, and grant terms can affect project delivery and service continuity. • Proposed revisions to federal grant rules (2 CFR Part 200) and to Head Start Performance Standards could change reporting, accountability and administrative requirements.
MARC position	• Support FY27 appropriations for federal programs with significant regional fiscal exposure, using a program-level funding matrix to focus engagement. • Support the timely obligation, release and administration of appropriated and awarded funds, consistent with congressional intent and applicable law. • Support reasonable notice, stated cause and reimbursement of costs incurred when grants are terminated or materially changed. • Preserve direct eligibility for regional councils, metropolitan planning organizations and local governments. • Offer constructive input on proposed grant rules, including retaining agency-specific program guidance, scaling reporting to award size and tying accountability to matters recipients can reasonably monitor or control. • Support Head Start standards, eligibility pathways and administrative funding flexibility consistent with the Head Start Act.
Approach to initial actions	• Build relationships with delegation members and appropriations committees, and communicate MARC's positions on regulatory proposals as needed. • Follow executive branch implementation of appropriations and related grant actions. • Coordinate with NARC and other partners on messaging with the delegation, committee leaders and key agencies.
Benefits to the region	• Protects committed projects, local subawards, staff capacity and services delivered through regional and community partners. • Provides greater certainty for multiyear budgets, contracts and implementation schedules. • Limits administrative cost and disruption from abrupt changes, particularly for smaller local and nonprofit partners. • Supports continuity of Head Start services and local program capacity.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT REAUTHORIZATION	
Why it matters	• The Older Americans Act is overdue for reauthorization while demand for nutrition, caregiver and community-based services continues to grow. • Federal funding has not kept pace with demographic change, rising service costs and increased waiting lists following the end of supplemental pandemic funding.

MARC position	• Support reauthorization with funding that reflects increasing demand and service-delivery costs. • Provide Area Agencies on Aging greater flexibility to tailor nutrition, transportation, caregiver and other supports to regional needs. • Strengthen community-based services and the direct-care workforce so older adults and people with disabilities can remain in their homes and communities. • Encourage coordination with health care, housing and other community-support systems.
Approach to initial actions	• Build relationships with the delegation and relevant committees, and share MARC's position on key principles for reauthorization. • Follow federal agency statements and engagement on reauthorization and FY27 appropriations. • Coordinate with USAging, NARC and other partners on messaging.
Benefits to the region	• Helps older adults age in place while supporting families, caregivers and the regional provider network. • Allows MARC's Area Agency on Aging to respond effectively to needs across its Missouri service area. • Strengthens nutrition and community-based services as regional demand increases.

ISSUES TO MONITOR

MARC will track these issues because federal action is reasonably plausible and consequences could be significant. Staff will assess impacts and recommend targeted engagement to the Board when warranted.

Issue	Monitoring focus	Benefits to the region
Housing and community development	Track implementation of the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, including rulemaking, guidance and deadlines; assess appropriations and program changes affecting CDBG, HOME and other federal tools; elevate proposals when they create a material regional opportunity or risk and MARC has a clear role.	Supports MARC's Regional Housing Partnership activities, helps local governments and partners use federal housing tools effectively, and connects housing with transportation, workforce, aging and infrastructure priorities.
2030 Census and federal data	Track the Census Bureau's review of public comments and any final rule on residence criteria and demographic questions; follow congressional oversight, Census Bureau appropriations, any legal challenges and 2030 Census readiness; assess effects on data continuity, funding formulas and local planning and share findings with members.	Supports an accurate 2030 Census and fair allocation of federal resources, protects the data foundation for regional planning, and allows early analysis and member coordination if data quality could be affected.

ISSUES IN RESERVE

MARC will maintain awareness of these established interests without routine tracking. Staff will assess engagement when specific federal action has material implications for MARC or the region.

Issue	MARC Interest	Trigger for elevation
Federal AI and data center infrastructure policy	Ensure that federal AI and data center policies account for regional infrastructure capacity, utility and water demands, workforce impacts, local land-use authority, public costs and community benefits.	Elevate if Congress or the executive branch advances an AI framework or data center proposal that materially affects local infrastructure, energy or water systems, permitting, taxation, workforce development or local government authority.
Child care affordability, tax credit and employer-incentive legislation	Support affordable, accessible child care and a stable early-learning system that meets the needs of families, providers, employers and the regional workforce.	Elevate if legislation would materially change federal child care subsidies, family or employer tax credits, provider incentives, workforce investments, or the financing and delivery of early-learning services.
Farm Bill and federal nutrition-program reauthorization	Preserve federal resources that strengthen food security, improve access to healthy food, and support nutrition services for older adults, children, families and underserved communities.	Elevate if the Farm Bill, appropriations legislation or executive action would materially change nutrition benefits, eligibility, incentive programs, older-adult nutrition services or other federal resources connected to MARC programs and regional food security.
Next Generation 911 and federal public-safety funding	Sustain reliable, interoperable regional emergency communications and federal investments that strengthen coordinated public-safety preparedness and response.	Elevate if federal legislation, appropriations or administrative action would materially affect Next Generation 911 deployment, UASI funding, emergency communications, or another regional public-safety system that MARC administers, supports or coordinates.
WIOA reauthorization and federal workforce policy	Maintain a responsive regional workforce system that connects residents to employment and equips employers and workers for technological, demographic and economic change.	Elevate if WIOA reauthorization or other federal workforce legislation would materially change workforce-board responsibilities, funding, performance requirements, eligible activities, apprenticeships, training programs or regional workforce strategies.
FEMA disaster, flood insurance and hazard-mitigation policy	Preserve federal tools that enable local governments and regional partners to reduce risk, prepare for disasters, recover effectively, and address flooding and other hazards.	Elevate if FEMA or National Flood Insurance Program legislation, funding changes or executive action would materially affect regional hazard mitigation, flood-risk management, disaster assistance, insurance availability or local government emergency-management capacity.