

AIR QUALITY FORUM

Meeting Summary

October 8, 2024

10:00 – 11:30 a.m.

MARC Board Room (Hybrid)

Attendance:

Members and Alternate in Attendance:

Rollin Sachs, Johnson Co. DHE	Allison Smith, KDOT
Carol Adams, KCMO EMC	Dan Williams, KCMO
John Neuberger, Sierra Club	Richard Rocha, Bayer
Keith Johnson, EPA 7	Josh Woods, OP
Mary English, MEC	Hillary Shields, Lee's Summit
Justus Welker, Johnson County	Leena Divakar, KSU (PPI)
Michael Parks, Lee's Summit	

MARC Staff:

Tom Jacobs, MARC	Doug Norsby, MARC
Kate Ludwig, MARC	Cy Smith, MARC
Rachel Krause, MARC	Martin Rivarola, MARC
Karen Clawson, MARC	Ashley Sadowski, MARC

MARC Staff:

1. Introductions and Determination of Quorum

2. Approval of August Meeting Summary*

- a. Motion: Richard Rocha
- b. Second: John Neuberger

a. APPROVED

3. Buildings & Energy Presentations from MEC and Be-EX KC

MEC – Mary English from MEC shared some statistics surrounding asthma, particularly its disproportionate impact on Black communities. The study conducted by the Metropolitan Energy Center and Children's Mercy Hospital examined the effects of weatherization on asthma patients, utilizing data from over 6,000 homes

in Kansas City. The findings revealed that homes, regardless of age, often presented challenges for occupants due to inefficiencies in building design. Notably, the study indicated a 34% reduction in acute care visits for children living in weatherized homes, underscoring the importance of building efficiency and weatherization in improving indoor air quality and reducing energy loss.

Further discussions delved into ongoing research regarding home insulation and air sealing, particularly their effects on health issues like mold and asthma. The authors are preparing their findings for peer review and are seeking additional funding to explore causation. The conversation also addressed the challenges posed by wildfire smoke and the correlation between home conditions and asthma attacks. Emphasis was placed on the need for continued research to better understand these relationships and improve building performance codes, as well as the importance of addressing health standards related to mold.

a. Questions:

- Tom Jacobs asked, Is the issue that's going on in the walls and/or the envelope of the house?
 - What's going on in the walls and envelope is what is causing the ambient air quality to not be as good.
- Tom Jacobs, did you unpack that 34% statistic?
 - Yes, we have a whole 20 pages report on the unpacking of the 34%.
- Doug Norsby, what was the length of the study period?
 - 6 years. Indoor smoking was not included in this report.

b. **BE-EX** - Ashley Sadowski, from the BE-Ex, joined the Air Quality forum to share about BE-Ex's work and how their goal is to decrease building greenhouse gas emissions that currently account for 63% of all GHG emissions. BE-Ex is around to be a resource for home efficiency and does training for high-performance building technology and clean technologies. BE-Ex is currently 3 ½ years old and was started right after the launch of MARC's Climate Action Plan. After about 1 ½ years, BE-Ex was able to establish their goals and how BE-Ex in KC fits into the larger picture. The goals of BE-Ex are:

- a. Tracking building carbon
- b. Demystifying high-performance building practices through education
- c. Provide Direct support to Building Owners
- d. Catalyze energy efficiency upgrades in disinvested communities.

BE-Ex works with nonprofits through the Renew America's Nonprofits grant. The grant is for nonprofits with deferred maintenance. There are currently 68 nonprofits that applied, applications were due in August and currently under review.

Additionally, BE-Ex is working to create a case-study-library. If you have a high-performance design or construction, please send my way at asadowski@marc.org.

Discussion:

- Are there barriers/opportunities for building efficiency in your day job?
 - Richard Rocha, has the 2021 building codes been worked out? Earlier they only had seven permits and lots of people weren't included.
 - Yes, that has been resolved. The delay was caused because a system wasn't in place for permitting. A system is now in place and the city is caught up on permitting.
 - Mary English, is the series of listening session a committee or what is the structure?
 - This group is meant to be educational and informative for folks within the energy efficiency space- all are welcome to join the conversation.
 - Josh Woods shared that they have energy improvement projects going on around city hall, but not solely because of energy efficiency.
 - Doug Norsby shared that there currently isn't a health standard for mold in homes and that's what makes these codes more important.
 - Mary English, we must think about efficiency more like seatbelts and codes are the way to address this reduction.

4. Department of Transportation Report to Congress: Decarbonizing U.S. Transportation

- a) Cy Smith, from MARC, discussed a U.S. Department of Transportation report focusing on decarbonization strategies for the transportation sector, which accounted for 33% of greenhouse gas emissions in 2020. The report emphasizes the need for a 50-52% reduction in emissions by 2030 and outlines the significant financial impacts of climate change on infrastructure, predicting a loss of \$2.2 trillion in federal revenue annually by the next century.

Questions:

- Mary English, what are we doing about expanding our transportation system.
 - Martin is about to share more about the expansion of our current transportation system.
- Richard Rocha, what was the date that this study was published? Seems like a lot of car manufacturers are pulling back on EVs.

5. Connected KC 2050 Policy Discussion

6. Martin Rivarola, from MARC, provided an overview of the Connecticut CKC 2050 transportation plan, highlighting its requirement for updates every five years. Rivarola discussed the plan's policy goals, including access to opportunity, public health and safety, and economic vitality, while also addressing public feedback gathered through surveys. There is a need for adjustments based on community priorities and the importance of sustainable funding for transportation projects. Nearly all regional residents strongly support healthy environments with clean air and water. Performance metrics reflect a persistent lack of progress or even back-sliding in some of those areas related to safety, system condition, asset management, public health, etc.

Discussion:

- Does the policy framework reflect public preference?
 - Carol Adams, one thing observed is there is a tremendous lack of enforcement regarding speed and the rule of the road. How do we tackle safety with technology?
 - Safety has been the main comment we have heard from the public. By creating more complete streets we are opening corridors to all people for driving, biking, walking, etc. Complete streets also reduce speed on roadways.
 - Kelly Gilbert, I am curious to know how long it takes Complete Street Strategy to be enforced. Do we have examples we can point to, to move projects along faster.
 - Yes, there are examples we have been pointing to. We have a very extensive region and there are a lot of examples we can share.
 - Mary English, this was done with community feedback. What is the plan to continue community engagement around this work? Is there room in the plan for continuing engagement more on the education level, and then getting feedback regarding plan.
 - There is a lot of space for education around the strategy of the benefits.

7. Next Meeting – Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

8. Adjourn