



2024 - 2028

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)



September 2024

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a result of invaluable input, expertise and collaboration between many regional stakeholders and organizations. The final document would not have been possible without their participation.

- Finn Meggitt, MRPC Community Development Specialist Intern
- CEDS Advisory Committee Members
- MRPC Planning Committee Members
- MRPC Board Members

(Full list of all committee members located in Appendices)

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A CEDS?

A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to identify regional priorities for economic and community development. The final document is an action-driven plan developed by local and regional representatives from private, public, and non-profit sectors. This CEDS is for the eight-county Meramec Region that includes Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski, and Washington Counties.

WHY DO WE NEED A CEDS?

An effective CEDS allows a region to maximize its economic development potential, as well as engage with the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and other federal partners to receive infrastructure and technical assistance grants, such as EDA's Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance programs. Overall, an effective CEDS planning process identifies locally grown strategies that will guide regional economic development, encourage partnerships and collaboration, and improve economic outcomes and overall quality of life in our region.

THE ORIGINAL CEDS

The Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) submitted an initial Overall Economic Development Program (OEDP) in 1975. That program was updated in 1998, presenting new information on the progress of the region as well as identifying additional needs.

The 2002 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy was a product of information gathered in meetings held in each of the seven counties in the Meramec Region, at that time. Since 2002, Pulaski County has joined the region. The list of needs that were identified across the region fell into eight major categories:

- Economic Development/Tourism
- Human Resources and Services

- Physical Environment
- Local Governments
- Transportation
- Housing
- Community Involvement and Communication
- Infrastructure

Based on the updated CEDS guidelines from 2016 and updates in 2023, the current CEDS Advisory Committee has consolidated the previous list of needs into four main goals that focus on:

- Economic Development
- Infrastructure
- Healthy Communities
- Housing

PREPARING THE CEDS

The CEDS document is the result of a year-long planning process which included data gathering and input from people who live and work in the Meramec Region. A list of planning partners is provided in the appendices.

Over the course of six meetings, the CEDS Advisory Committee:

- Completed a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) for the region
- Prioritized strengths/opportunities and weaknesses/threats
- Identified priority goals, objectives and strategies
- Set action items and implementation goals for the next 5 years

A page on MRPC's website was created to track progress, post meeting updates, and provide links to surveys throughout the CEDS process.

<https://www.meramecregion.org/comprehensive-economic-development-strategy/>. Once the final document is submitted to EDA, MRPC will use the

page to track progress in the region. As a part of the annual CEDS review, MRPC will create a tracker report to review and compare updated annual data to the baseline data established in this CEDS. A copy of the CEDS Benchmarks report for the previous six years is included in the appendices.

THE MERAMEC REGION

The Meramec Region was designated as an Economic Development District in 1975 and, since then, has assisted in providing planning and



technical assistance to local governments with the goal of improving the quality of life in participating counties. Most

communities in the region do not have the resources to maintain professional staff to assist with planning and economic development. The district operates as the Meramec Regional Planning Commission (MRPC), created by Governor Warren E. Hearnes in 1969 under the State and Regional Planning and Community Development Act of 1965.

At that time, the region included Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Phelps and Washington counties. Additionally, on November 13, 1997, Governor Mel Carnahan issued Executive Order No. 97-14, adding Osage County to the boundaries of the Meramec Regional Planning Commission. On August 22, 2005, Missouri Governor Matt Blunt

signed Executive Order 05-21, amending the boundaries of the Meramec Region to include Pulaski County. Pulaski County petitioned MRPC for inclusion in the



region after withdrawing membership in a neighboring regional planning commission. The county, along with the cities of St. Robert, Waynesville and Dixon, officially joined MRPC in September 2005. The city of Crocker joined in April 2006.

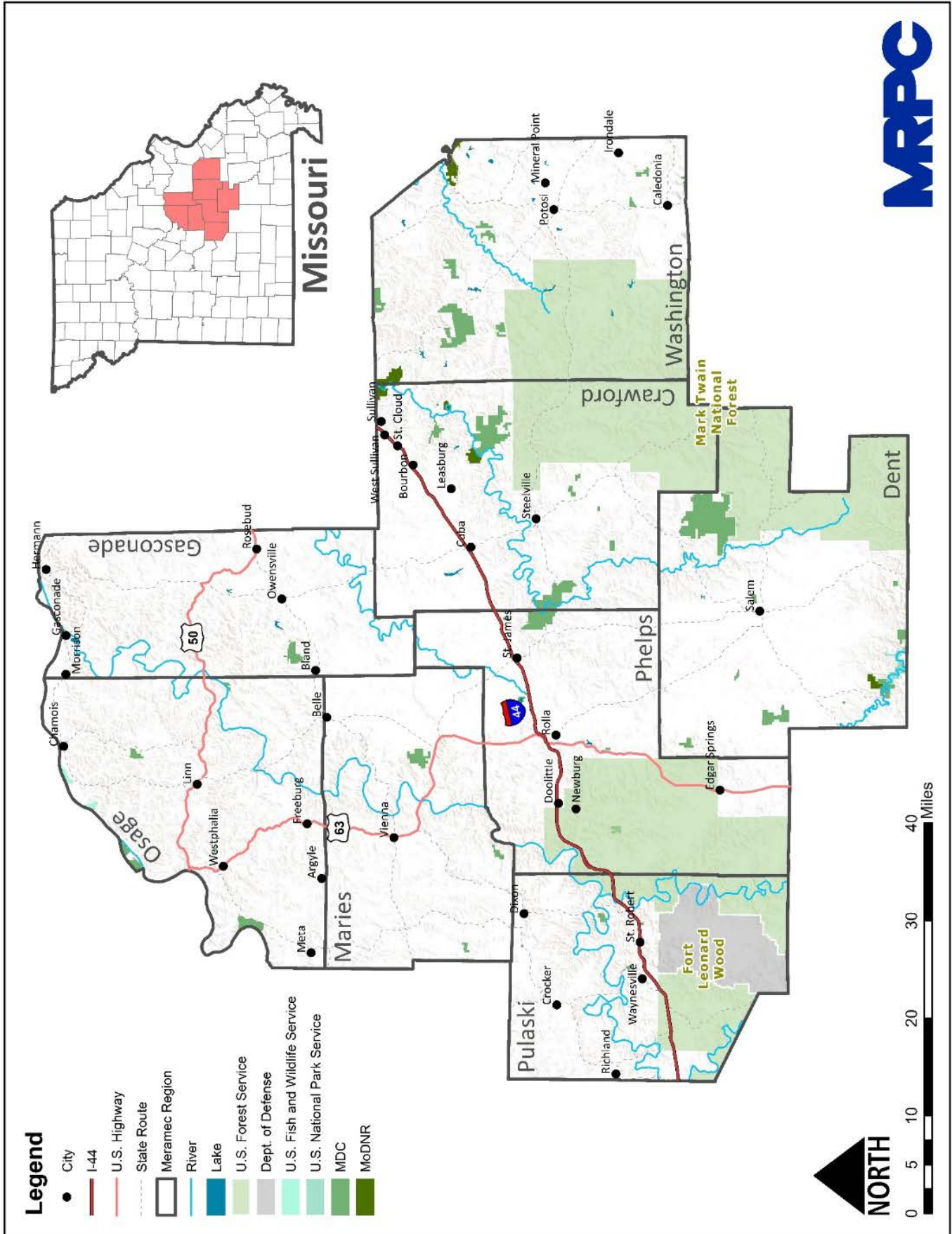
Active membership now consists of eight counties and 36 cities. MRPC has a 60-member board. Of these, 39 are local elected officials or their representatives and 21 are non-government representatives.

The economic development planning and support staff at MRPC consists of:

- Bonnie Prigge, executive director, has been with MRPC since 1991.
- Tammy Snodgrass, assistant director, has been with MRPC since 1992.
- Kelly Sink-Blair, project development manager, has been with MRPC since 2000.
- Anne Freand, planning department manager, has been with MRPC since 2016.
- Orin Pogue, senior community development specialist, has been with MRPC since 2023.
- Linda Loughridge, fiscal manager, has been with MRPC since 1995.
- Caitlin Jones, communications/marketing manager, has been with MRPC since 2016.
- Linda Carroll, secretary, has been with MRPC since 2016.
- Bethany Ferrell, accountant II, has been with MRPC since 2018.

A copy of the 2024 CEDS will be made available to all member counties and cities in the Meramec Region as well as local economic developers and other interested groups/individuals.





REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Meramec region consists of eight counties located in the southeast-central parts of Missouri. The area covers over 5,131 square miles and includes 36 municipalities. The region, comprised of Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Osage, Phelps, Pulaski and Washington counties, is marked with gently rolling hills, deep valleys and plateaus. Numerous rivers and streams traverse the region, creating a natural draw for outdoor enthusiasts. Many of the small towns still have major manufacturing plants. Wineries are scattered across the region making it a popular draw for tourists (Meramec Regional Planning Commission). The closest major city is St. Louis, about an hour-and-a-half north-east of the region. Two important institutions in the region are the Missouri University of Science and Technology with approximately 7,100 students (fall 2023) located in Rolla (Phelps County) and a major military base, Fort Leonard Wood

(Pulaski County) both of which offer many opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs.

POPULATION GROWTH

The Meramec region followed a similar growth pattern to the rest of rural Missouri up until 1950. The region’s population grew until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when suddenly the growth slowed and stagnated. The Meramec region again grew rapidly between 1950 and 1960, increasing by nearly 40%. The growth was situated mostly in Pulaski County which grew from a population of 10,392 to 46,334. Since 1960, the Meramec Region has stood out among non-metropolitan areas in Missouri because it has experienced growth in every census since 1960.

The Decennial Census shows the population of the Meramec Region increasing by 10,167 people between 2010 (185,917 people) and 2020 (196,084 people). Despite this strong growth, only two of

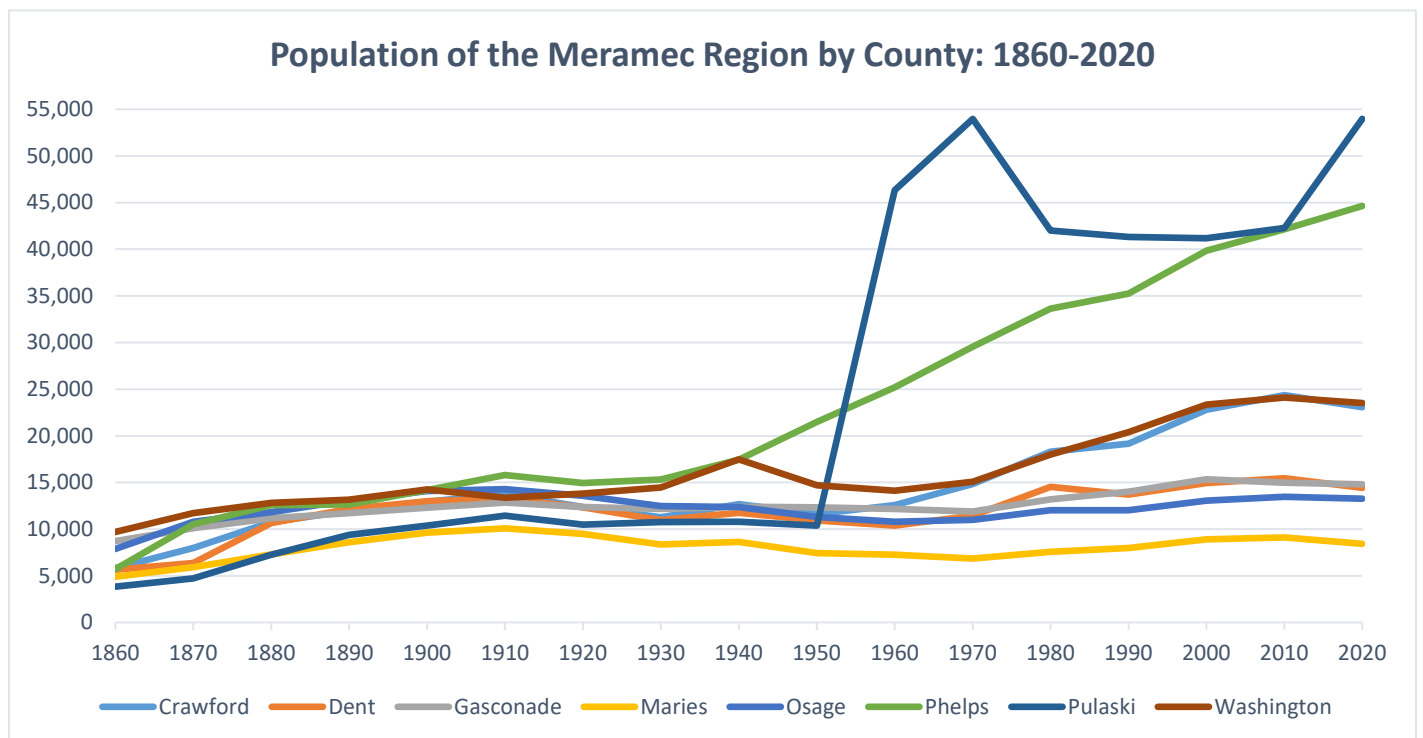


Figure X Source: US Decennial Census 1860-2020

the region’s eight counties saw an increase in population, Phelps and Pulaski. The majority of the region’s growth was in Pulaski County, which saw an increase of 11,670 people.

the projected growth of the state (6%) for the same period.

Population Increase by County 2018-2022						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Change (%)
Meramec Region	199,344	198,743	198,344	196,364	196,310	-1.52%
Crawford	24,280	24,154	23,984	23,204	23,023	-5.18%
Dent	15,504	15,545	15,518	14,585	14,509	-6.42%
Gasconade	14,746	14,711	14,673	14,803	14,801	0.37%
Maries	8,884	8,803	8,791	8,457	8,454	-4.84%
Osage	13,619	13,615	13,613	13,372	13,374	-1.80%
Phelps	44,789	44,630	44,587	44,692	44,843	0.12%
Pulaski	52,591	52,425	52,359	53,460	53,726	2.16%
Washington	24,931	24,860	24,819	23,791	23,580	-5.42%

Figures X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022 Table: P9

More recent data from the U. S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates show the population of the region has declined since 2018; however, Gasconade, Phelps, and Pulaski counties have all shown consistent growth. Those counties showing a population decline within the last five years are Dent (losing the most), Washington, Crawford, Maries, and Osage (losing the least).

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Meramec region is projected to reach just over 205,000 people by 2030 according to the Missouri Office of Budget and Management and the Missouri State Demographer. The estimated regional growth of 3.1% is almost half the rate of

MIGRATION

In contrast to natural population growth, the Meramec region has seen positive net migration since 2019. However, the amount of migration varies greatly by county. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) migration data shows Maries, Osage, Pulaski, and Washington counties losing people while Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, and Phelps gained residents. Pulaski County is losing the most people in the region and has experienced negative net migration since 2020.

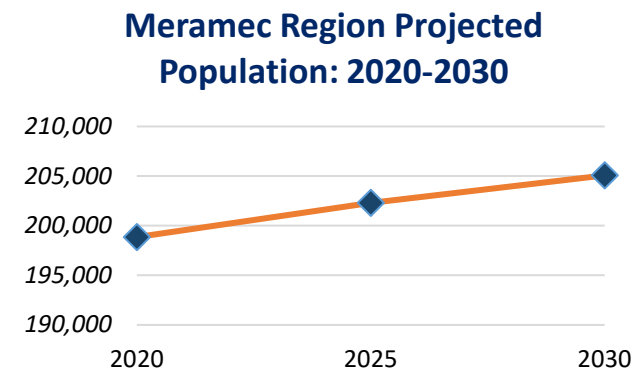


Figure X Source: MO Office of Budget and Management 2000-2030 Population Projections

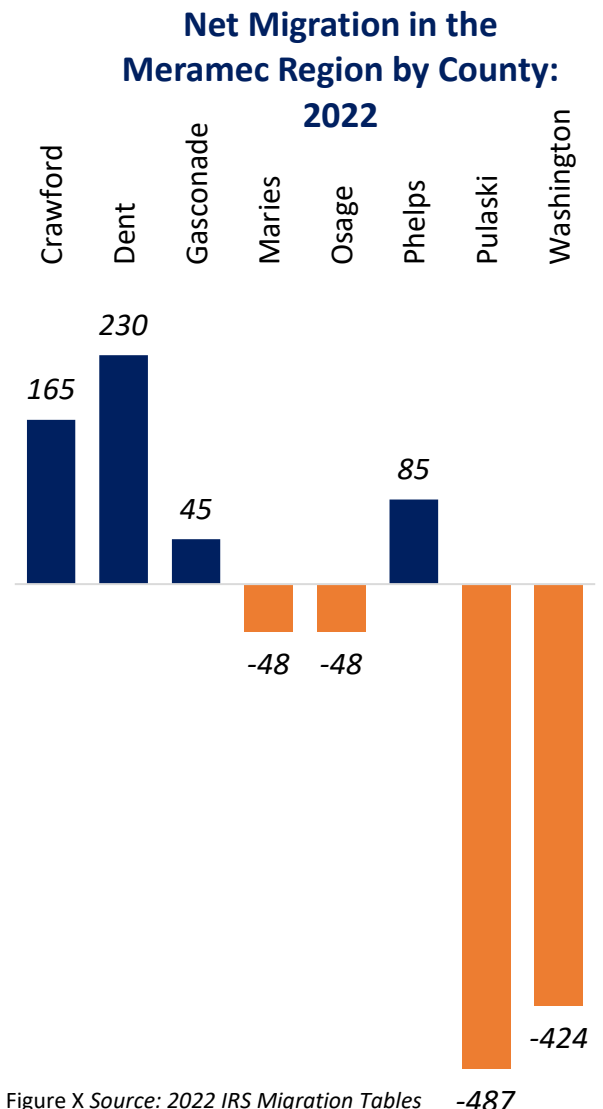


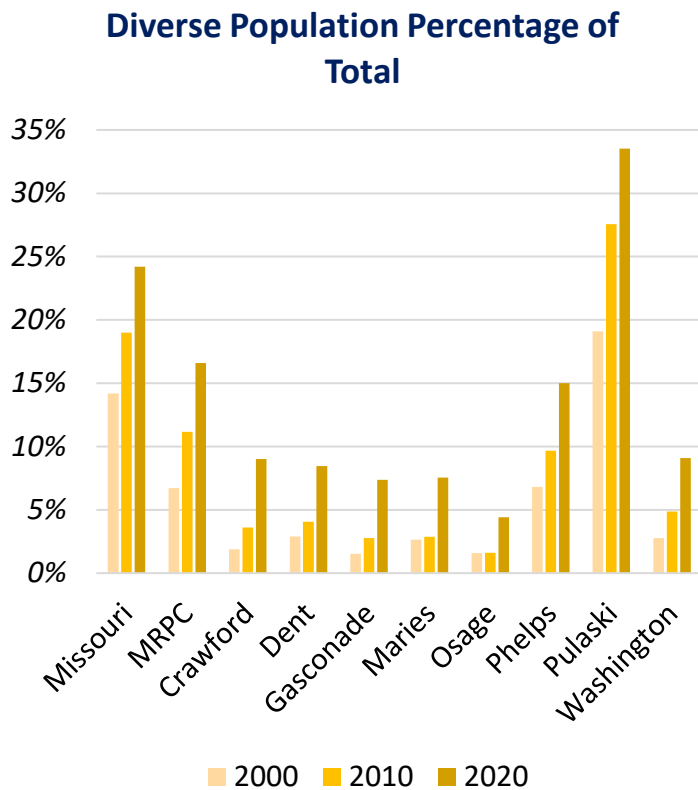
Figure X Source: 2022 IRS Migration Tables

The other counties in the region have had positive, but minimal, net migration since at least 2018.

Data from the census estimates differs in some counties from the IRS migration estimates. The most notable is Washington County, which according to the IRS lost 424 people in 2022, but experienced net positive migration since 2021 based on census numbers. The IRS estimates are more likely to be correct based off economic data that depicts a shrinking economy.

RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The Meramec Region is significantly less diverse than the state. The diverse population is contained mostly in Pulaski County, where 34% of the population are racially and ethnically diverse. The only other county with a significant minority population is Phelps. Pulaski County also has the highest percentage of every racially diverse group in the region, except for the Asian population, which is highest in Phelps County.



Figures X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022

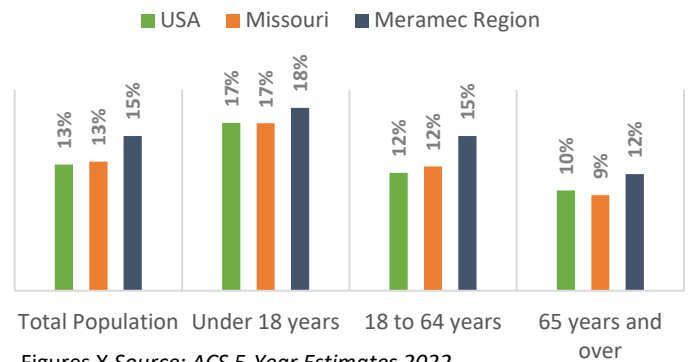
The region has become increasingly diverse since 2000. Every county in the region has seen an increase in the racially diverse population. The

region has also been becoming more diverse faster than the state, Missouri’s diverse population percentage increased by 70%, while the region’s increased by 147%. With the exception of Pulaski, every county has seen a triple digit increase in the percentage of racially diverse people. Gasconade County is the highest and has seen a 382% increase since 2000.

POVERTY

According to 2022 5-Year ACS estimates, 9.9% of the Meramec Region families are living in poverty. This figure is down slightly from 11.1% in 2018. While Washington County families (14.8%) have historically led the region in percent of population meeting poverty guidelines for the past 30 years, Dent, Maries and Pulaski counties are currently close behind (11.1%, 11% and 11.1% respectively).

Percent of Population in Poverty by Vulnerable Age Group



Figures X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022

TRANSPORTATION

Three federal highways pass through the region: Interstate 44, U.S. 63 and U.S. 50. Interstate 44 bisects the region in a northeast to southwest direction and serves as the major highway between St. Louis and Springfield with Rolla being about the half-way point. U.S. 63 connects Vienna and Rolla with Jefferson City, and U.S. 50 runs east and west through Gasconade and Osage counties. Most of the remaining highways in the region are maintained by MoDOT.

Several Meramec communities also have airports: Rolla National Airport located at Vichy; Sullivan

Airport; Washington County Airport in Potosi; Salem Airport; Cuba Airport; Hermann Airport; Waynesville-St. Robert Regional Airport in Fort Leonard Wood, and State Technical College Airport in Linn. Additionally, four railways serve the region. Burlington Northern operates the most miles of track in the region and follows the general route of I-44 through Crawford and Phelps counties. While rail service in the region is not as prevalent as it once was, Amtrak has begun discussions on expanding passenger rail throughout the region. At this time, Amtrak only crosses the Meramec Region and stops at its very northeastern point at Hermann.

As of 2024, the city of Hermann has also become involved with a port development along the Missouri River. While the port will be located in Montgomery County to the north, the city, region and Highway 19 (north/south highway providing connection between Interstates 70 and 44) will be economically impacted by the expansion.

Since 2018, the Rock Island State Park was created, and several miles of the abandoned rail line have been converted to trail. Currently, sections of the trail in Belle, Owensville and Gasconade County within the Meramec Region have been funded with Transportation Alternative Program and Regional Trails Program funds. MRPC and regional partners continue to work on funding for the remainder of the trail. Other active transportation projects include planning documents for the cities of Salem, Potosi, Belle, Bland and Rosebud.

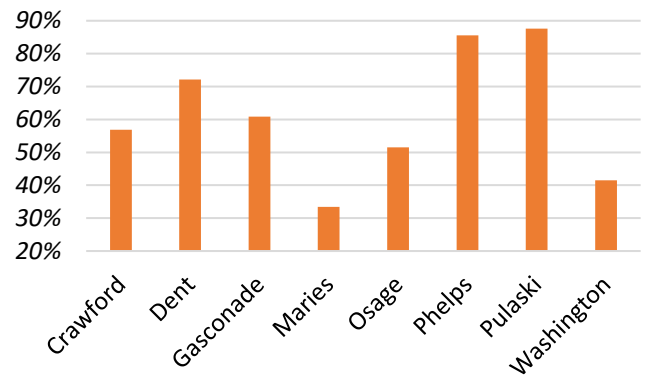
COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS

Pulaski, Phelps, Dent counties have the lowest commute times all around 20 minutes. Crawford, Gasconade, and Osage have commute times around 25-30 minutes. Finally, Washington and Maries have commute times well in excess of 30 minutes.

Phelps and Pulaski Counties have the highest portion of workers working in county of residence. Of those living in Dent County, 70% of the workers also live in the county. Gasconade, Crawford, and Osage are all between 50% and 60% of workers working in their home county. Finally, less than

50% of workers in Washington and Maries counties work in county of residence.

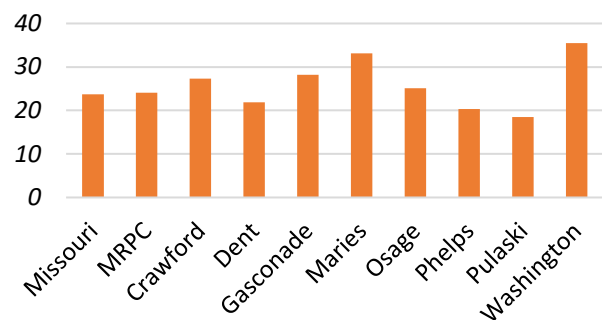
Percent of Population Working in County of Residence: 2022



Figures X Source: ACS 5-year Estimates Table: DP04

Low commute times, jobs, and high percentages of workers residing in county of residence indicate people are commuting to Phelps County the most relative to Pulaski County, as most workers in Pulaski County live in Pulaski County. Maries and Washington counties are largely working in other counties (Phelps and Jefferson, respectively). Dent County is unique because the difference between jobs and workers is not significant, and most workers stay in their county of residence. Limited amounts likely commute to Phelps County. Crawford, Gasconade, and Osage counties have a balance between people commuting in and out of the area.

Mean Commute Time by County: 2022

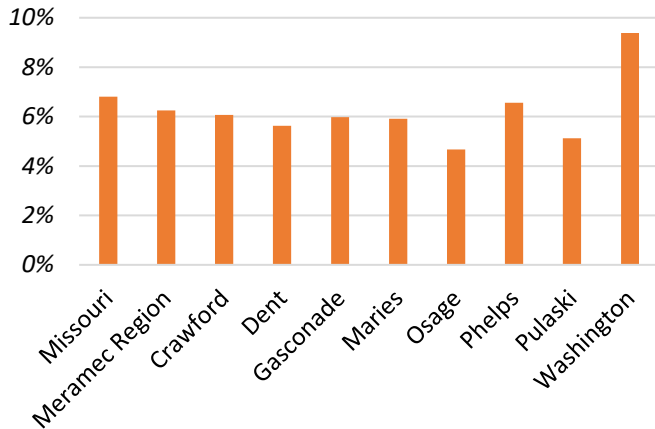


Figures X Source: ACS Five Year Estimates 2022 Table: S0801

The following table provides an overview of household car availability for each county in the

region. While a majority of households have access to at least one vehicle, a range of 4.7% – 9.4% has no vehicle availability at all within the Meramec Region.

Percent of Households with no Vehicles: 2022



Figures X Source: ACS Five Year Estimates 2022 Table: B08141

TOURISM

Missouri State Parks provides visitor numbers for each of the parks within the region based on yearly visits and compares the totals to the previous year. In 2023, 1,707,921 people traveled through the region visiting one of the six state parks which are completely or partially located within the eight counties. This was a decrease of 5.15% since 2018, largely due to the sharp decline in attendance at Meramec State Park. While outdoor recreation increased during the pandemic, the overall number of visitors to state parks has not reached a pre-pandemic high in 2020.

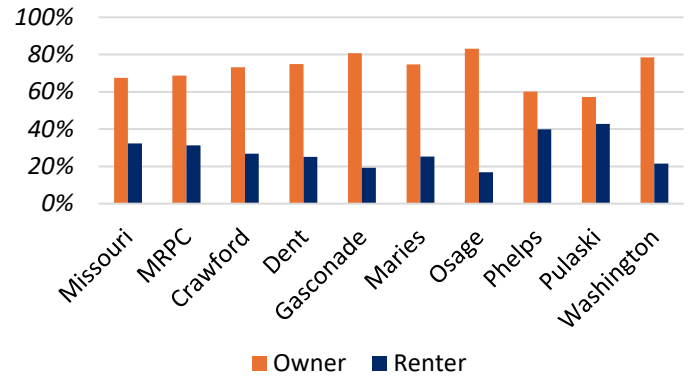
State Park Visitors: 2018-2023			
	2018	2023	% Change
Deutsch Heim State Historic Site	3,606	3,882	7.7%
Dillard Mill	28,138	25,950	-7.8%
Onondaga Cave	416,794	421,225	1.1%
Meramec	710,787	369,762	-48.0%
Montauk	528,041	580,715	10.0%
Washington	326,422	306,387	-6.1%

Figure X Source: Missouri State Park Attendance

HOUSING

The balance of renters and homeowners in the Meramec Region is nearly identical to Missouri. However, none of the region’s counties have an identical rate to Missouri and all of the region’s counties, except for Phelps and Pulaski, have a higher rate of homeowners than the Missouri average.

Tenure Status by County: 2022

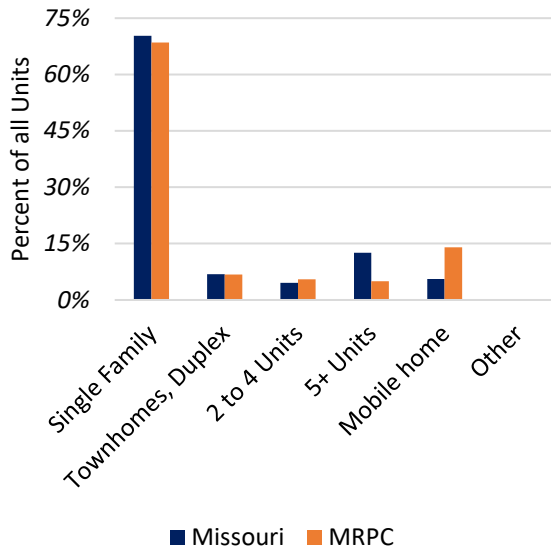


Figures X Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates Table: B25031

Phelps and Pulaski both have a homeownership rate of about 60%. One reason for the lower rate of homeownership is the population of Pulaski County tends to be more transient, 10% of current residents moved in over the last year for example. The poorest county in the region, Washington, has the third highest homeownership rate and has the least transient population in the region. Phelps County’s high rate of renters is likely due to Missouri S&T and other colleges in the area.

With regard to housing type breakdowns in a county (single-family, multi-family, mobile homes, etc.), the Meramec Region is similar to the state except for the most affordable housing options. The state has a higher portion of units inside buildings with five or more units while the region has a higher portion of mobile homes. This is for several reasons. The first is stricter zoning regulations in major metropolitan areas forbid the construction of new mobile homes.

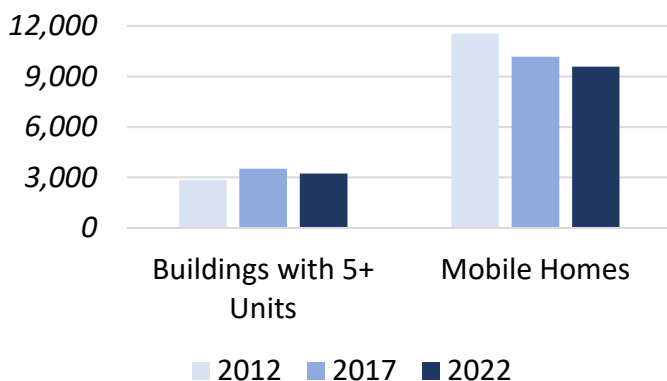
Housing Types: 2022



Figures X Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates Table: DP04

The second is large apartment buildings are usually not built in small towns. Informal housing (i.e. trailer parks and mobile homes) have to fill the affordability gap in the housing market left by the lack of large apartment buildings. Phelps County has the largest portion of large apartment buildings and is only 1.5% less than the state average. Washington County has the highest portion of mobile homes at nearly 30% of the housing stock. Gasconade and Osage Counties have the highest portion of single-family homes at 78.4% and 81.4% respectively.

Number of Units in Affordable Housing Types in the Meramec Region



Figures X Source: ACS 1-Year Estimates Table: DP04

Housing in the Meramec Region has gotten more expensive over the last five years. Home values in Missouri have increased by 28% since 2018 and in the Meramec Region, they have increased by 25%. In Missouri however, incomes have increased by ten percent while in the Meramec Region they have only increased by 3.6%.

The median home in the Meramec Region is around \$200,000, while in Missouri it is around \$245,000. Osage is the only county in the region with a median home value above the state average, the median home in Osage County is near \$250,000. Home values in Maries County are also high at \$230,000. The counties with the cheapest homes are Dent and Washington counties, Washington County in particular has a median home value of \$170,000.

Median Home Value: 2023

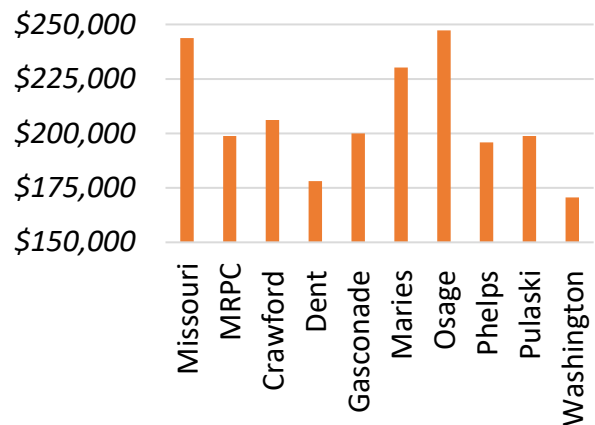


Figure X Source: Zillow Home Value Index

According to the ACS, when adjusted for inflation, rents in the Meramec Region have fallen since 2018 in contrast to the rest of the state where rents have increased by just under 5% in the same time period. In three counties in the Meramec Region rents have gone up and by a significant amount. Washington and Crawford counties have seen an almost 10% increase in inflation adjusted rents since 2018. Rents have also fallen significantly in Pulaski, Phelps, and Maries counties since 2018.

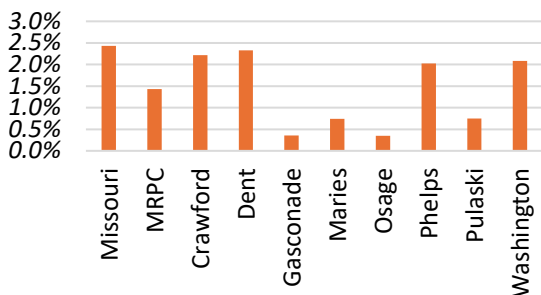
Due to rising home and rental prices, there has been a loss of affordable housing in the Meramec Region since 2012. The number of mobile homes has fallen by 20% over the last ten years. The number of units in large apartment buildings has also not substantially increased and has hovered around 3,000 units over the same time period.

Median Gross Rent by County in Current Dollars: 2018-2022						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change
Missouri	\$1,003	\$1,021	\$1,012	\$1,045	\$1,053	4.9%
MRPC	\$885	\$890	\$891	\$899	\$877	-1.0%
Crawford	\$787	\$768	\$785	\$832	\$862	9.5%
Dent	\$677	\$661	\$700	\$747	\$713	5.3%
Gasconade	\$738	\$752	\$667	\$644	\$727	-1.5%
Maries	\$706	\$688	\$654	\$713	\$641	-9.1%
Osage	\$660	\$658	\$679	\$684	\$651	-1.3%
Phelps	\$890	\$894	\$872	\$872	\$847	-4.9%
Pulaski	\$1,210	\$1,221	\$1,235	\$1,213	\$1,135	-6.2%
Washington	\$697	\$723	\$702	\$741	\$763	9.5%

Figures X Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates Tables: B25063

HUD subsidized housing plays a vital role in the housing market and the portion of people in HUD subsidized housing in the Meramec Region is less than in Missouri. The region is split into two clear sets of counties. Crawford, Dent, Phelps, and Washington counties all have around 2% of the population living in HUD subsidized housing, while only 1% of the population in Gasconade, Maries,

Percent of Population in HUD Subsidized or Public Housing: 2023



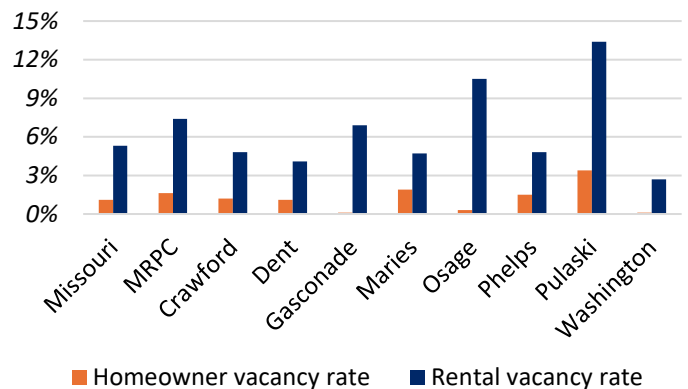
Figures X Source: HUD Public Housing & LIHTC & Section 8 Data Portals

Osage, and Pulaski counties live in HUD subsidized housing.

Another indicator of a healthy housing market is the vacancy rate. Albeit ACS vacancy rates are not perfect, they are still useful in the context of other data. The vacancy rate for owner-occupied units in the Meramec Region is marginally higher than Missouri. Pulaski County has the highest in the region, likely due to the highly transient population.

Gasconade, Osage, and Washington counties all have essentially a 0% vacancy rate for owner-occupied units. Washington County's vacancy rate, for both owner and renter occupied units, is surprisingly low considering the shrinking population and economy. The other counties in the region are all around the MRPC and Missouri average. Osage, Gasconade, and Pulaski have high rental vacancy rates.

Vacancy Rate by Tenure Status



Figures X Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates Table: DP04

CHILDCARE

On average, there are roughly 4.7 available childcare slots for every 10 children under the age of five in Missouri, up from 4.5 in January 2023. The University of Missouri Extension's Childcare Access Economy Indicator brief notes that the average drops to 3.1 in nonmetro counties as compared to 5.3 in metro counties. Osage County has the most available childcare, covering 72.6% of

children under the age of 5, followed by Phelps (33.2%), Gasconade (33.1%) and Crawford (31.8%) counties. Maries County has the least coverage, with only 15.3% of children covered. The remaining counties (Dent, Washington and Pulaski) cover approximately 21-30% of their children under the age of five.

In December 2023, the Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry reported that 80% of surveyed employers identified the expense and difficulty of finding childcare as a significant workforce barrier. Childcare shortages are estimated to result in an annual cost of \$1.35 billion for Missouri. In 2024, Missouri had 17 fewer registered childcare facilities than in the previous year yet served an additional 378 children.

While childcare employment dropped sharply following the pandemic, the Meramec Region experienced a partial rebound with an overall 8% increase in childcare workers. During this same period, the Meramec Region’s under-5 population decreased by 4.7%. The decline in population requiring care mitigates the statewide downward trend in the childcare workforce; however, the gap between available care and children in need remains substantial.

Capacity of the Childcare Industry: 2018-2024

	Child Care Workers			2024		Population Under Five Years		
	2018	2024	Change (%)	Facilities	Capacity	2018	2022	Change (%)
<i>Crawford</i>	64	65	2%	10	417	1,391	1,310	-5.8%
<i>Dent</i>	20	20	0%	5	242	874	806	-7.8%
<i>Gasconade</i>	52	47	-10%	9	253	758	765	0.9%
<i>Maries</i>	22	29	32%	4	60	405	392	-3.2%
<i>Osage</i>	95	125	32%	19	519	772	715	-7.4%
<i>Phelps</i>	92	67	-27%	16	782	2,577	2,359	-8.5%
<i>Pulaski</i>	105	132	26%	17	788	3,558	3,714	4.4%
<i>Washington</i>	34	38	12%	9	333	1,452	1,306	-10.1%

Figures X Source: Lightcast childcare services data, DHSS childcare facility database

AGING

The median age in the Meramec Region is younger than both the national and state average. The region is also not getting older, unlike the nation and Missouri, and several counties in the region are getting younger. The reason for the young median age is because the two largest counties, Phelps and Pulaski, are significantly younger than the state or nation. Missouri S&T and Fort Leonard Wood have resulted in men between the ages of 15 and 24 being 10% of the region’s population.

Change in Median Age: 2018-2022				
	2018	2022	Change	
USA	37.9	38.5	1.6%	
Missouri	38.5	38.8	0.8%	
Meramec Region	37.0	37.0	0.0%	
Crawford	41.7	42.3	1.4%	
Dent	44.4	43.7	-1.6%	
Gasconade	45.8	46.3	1.1%	
Maries	45	45.2	0.4%	
Osage	40.3	41.4	2.7%	
Phelps	35.2	36	2.3%	
Pulaski	27.7	27.7	0.0%	
Washington	40.7	39.8	-2.2%	

Source: ACS 2018, 2022 5-Year Estimates Table: S0101

Pulaski County’s median age is 70% of Missouri’s and Phelps County’s median age is 92% of Missouri’s. If you exclude Phelps and Pulaski counties, the region’s median age averages at 43 years old.

BROADBAND

Broadband investment in the Meramec Region has significantly increased since the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2019, the state has secured significant funding through federal programs like the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to invest in broadband infrastructure and has implemented state-funded initiatives such as the Missouri Broadband Grant Program and the Missouri Broadband Map. The map portal is designed to allow internet service providers and stakeholders a way to view available funding opportunities and information for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program across the State of Missouri.

MRPC also received CARES Act grant funds in 2020 to support community broadband planning in the region. County stakeholders, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and MRPC staff worked together to identify gaps in the region and report information to the Missouri Office of Broadband Development. As shown in the graph below, each county in the region has made gains in availability and adoption of broadband over the past four years, with the already small numbers of dial-up internet dropping even further and decreases to the number of households with no internet subscription.

Number of Households by Internet Type: 2018-2022

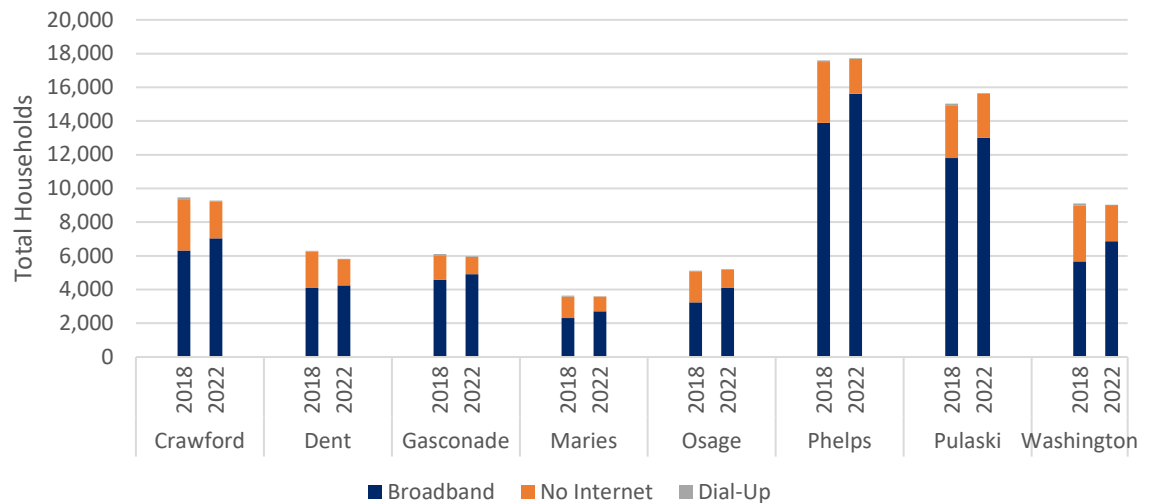


Figure X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022 Table: S2801

Unfortunately, most counties in the region still have more than 20% of households without internet, which far exceeds the state’s 13.2% deficit. The 2022 ACS data also shows that the biggest disparity between availability of a computer and lack of internet is in Dent County where 86.7% of households have some type of computer, but only 75.1% of households have internet.

Technology Access: 2022

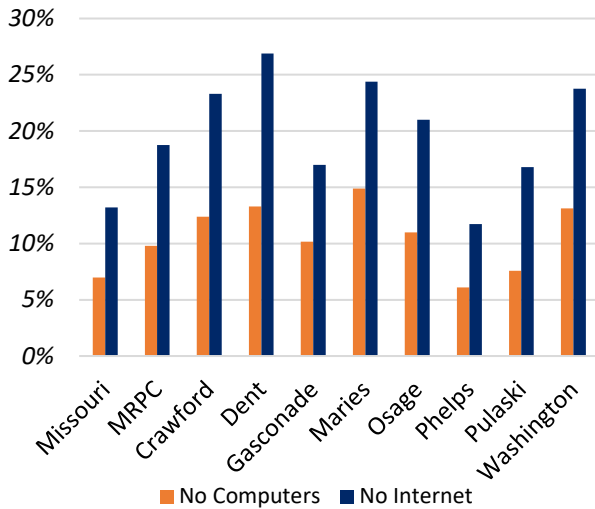


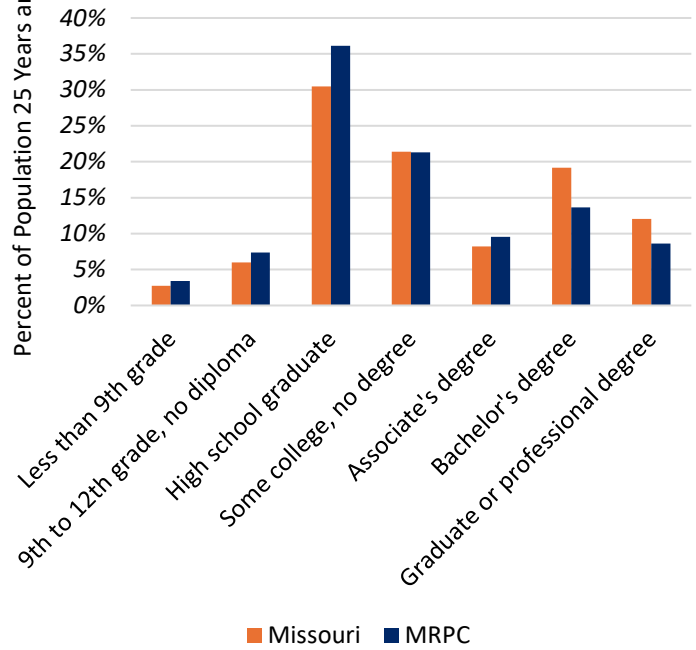
Figure X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2018-2022 Table: S2801

EDUCATION

The educational level of the residents of the Meramec Region has increased significantly in the last few decades. The percentage of individuals with at least a high school diploma increased between 2013 and 2017 (82.4% to 83.9%).

The percentage of individuals 25 years and older with some college to a professional degree also increased. Currently, Phelps and Pulaski Counties have the highest percentage of college graduates 25 years of age and older, 55.2% and 61.4%, respectively.

Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over: 2022



Figures X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Table: S1501

HEALTHCARE

Healthcare accessibility in rural areas is an issue across the nation and the Meramec Region is no exception. The region has nearly half as many primary care physicians per capita as the state average. Doctors are also not spread evenly across

Primary Care Physicians per 100,000: 2018-2023

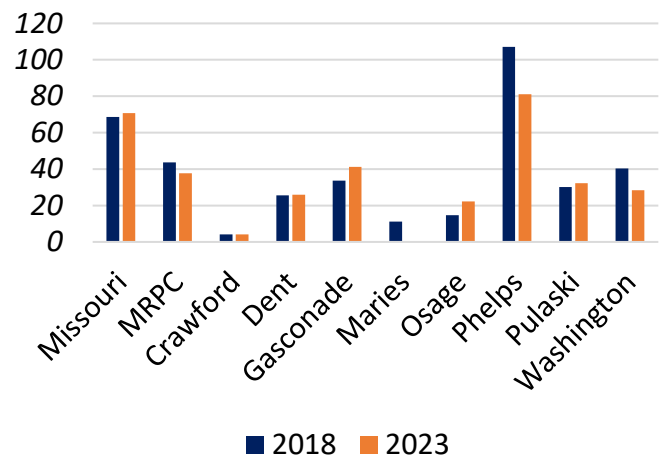


Figure X Source: County Health Rankings 2018, 2023

the region as over half of all the region’s doctors are in Phelps County. The region is also seeing a decreasing number of doctors. Phelps County specifically saw a decrease of 25% between 2018 and 2023.

Since 2018, the region experienced an increase in the number of uninsured people, despite Missouri and the nation seeing a decrease. The number of uninsured people fell in Phelps, Pulaski, and Gasconade counties, but the decrease in Phelps and Pulaski was marginal. Only Gasconade County has seen a significant decrease in the uninsured population. The number of uninsured people rose significantly in Dent, Crawford, Maries, and Washington counties.

Uninsured Population Percentage: 2018-2022

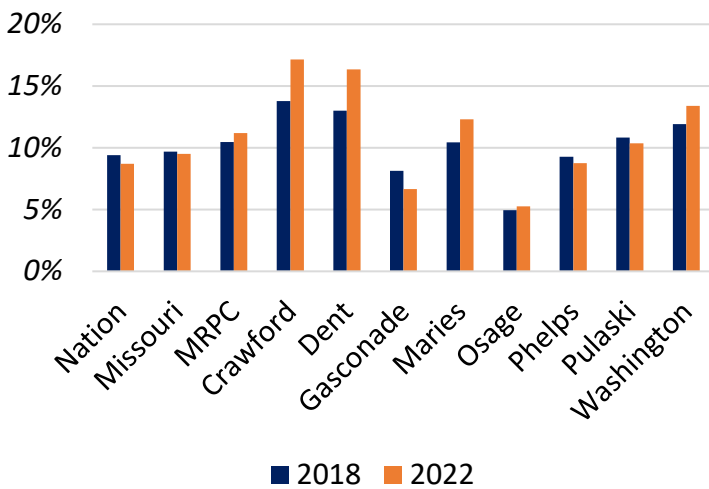


Figure X Source: ACS Five Year Estimates 2018, 2022 Table: S2701

The number of deaths per capita in the Meramec Region is not only higher than the state average, but the number of deaths increased at a rate higher than the state average. The number of deaths in the Meramec Region increased by 17% between 2018 and 2023, while in Missouri the number of deaths increased by only 12%. The three counties with the lowest death rates were Osage, Phelps, and Pulaski counties. Phelps and Pulaski counties likely have lower death rates because of their younger population and Osage County is lower because its wealthier.

Number of Deaths per 100,000: 2018-2023

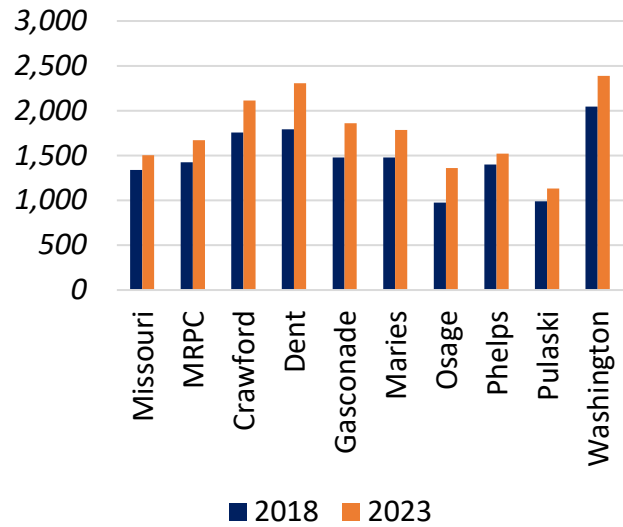


Figure X Source: County Health Rankings 2018, 2023

The rate of injury deaths in the Meramec Region increased by 16% between 2018 and 2023, just under the 17% increase in the state. Injury deaths include injuries from both intentional and unintentional causes, such as homicide or suicide, and motor vehicle accidents.

Number of Injury Deaths per 100,000: 2018-2023

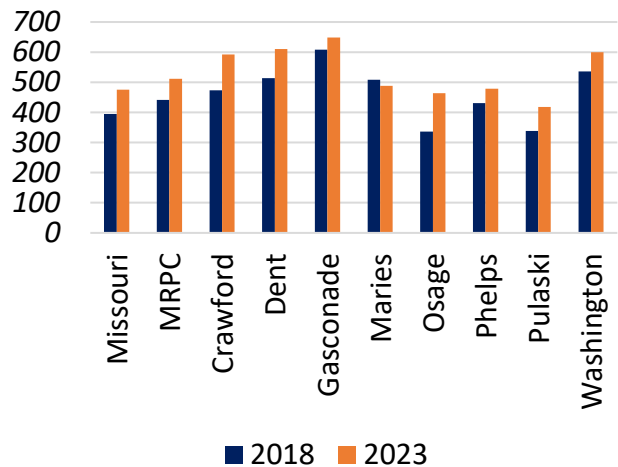


Figure X Source: County Health Rankings 2018, 2023

The overdose death rate increased by 77% between 2018 and 2023. The rate for the state increased by a significant, but smaller, 55%. Osage

County shows no deaths because of a lack of reported data. All data for the following tables came from County Health Rankings 2018 and 2023 data.

Number of Overdose Deaths per 100,000: 2018-2023

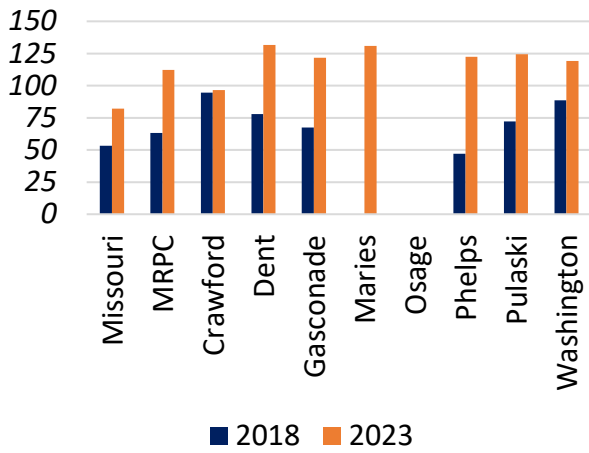


Figure X Source: County Health Rankings 2018, 2023

REGIONAL ECONOMY

INCOME

Wages in the Meramec Region are significantly lower than the state average. Every county in the Meramec Region has a lower per capita income than the state. Osage County comes the closest to the state average but is still around \$5,000 less. Washington County has the lowest per capita income in the region at \$41,357. The other six counties are all in the vicinity of \$50,000.

Incomes in the Meramec Region have also been growing slower than the state average. Real wages, or inflation adjusted wages, in the state of Missouri have increased by just under 10% since 2018, while in the Meramec Region they have only increased by 3.6% over the same period.

From 2018 to 2021 the region saw an 11.3% increase in real wages and the state saw an increase of 14.3%. Four of the region's counties, Crawford, Dent, Maries, and Washington saw an

Washington, Maries, Dent, and Crawford were also the four poorest counties in the region in 2018.

Real wages decreased significantly from 2021 to 2022. In the state of Missouri, they decreased by only 4%, while in the region they decreased by 7%. Osage County was the only county to see a smaller decrease in real wages than the state between 2021 and 2022. Pulaski County saw the largest decrease at just under 10%.

Between 2018 and 2022 Maries, Washington, and Crawford Counties saw an increase in wages above 8%. The region's two largest counties, Phelps and Pulaski, saw the smallest change, with Pulaski's overall wages in a minor decline since 2018. With changes to the economic landscape of the region, wage disparity in the region has leveled out with the exception of Osage County.

Per Capita Personal Income in Current Dollars: 2018-2022

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	% Change 2018 to 2022
Missouri	\$57,883	\$59,533	\$62,514	\$66,166	\$63,600	9.9%
MRPC	\$46,259	\$47,586	\$50,097	\$51,484	\$47,936	3.6%
Crawford	\$44,552	\$45,383	\$47,824	\$51,101	\$48,208	8.2%
Dent	\$42,724	\$43,976	\$47,540	\$48,864	\$45,242	5.9%
Gasconade	\$48,103	\$50,000	\$52,543	\$54,315	\$51,601	7.3%
Maries	\$41,323	\$44,148	\$46,627	\$48,505	\$45,033	9.0%
Osage	\$54,704	\$55,922	\$58,874	\$59,900	\$58,171	6.3%
Phelps	\$47,904	\$48,250	\$50,681	\$51,804	\$48,349	0.9%
Pulaski	\$48,377	\$50,408	\$52,578	\$52,968	\$47,990	-0.8%
Washington	\$37,966	\$39,257	\$41,856	\$43,996	\$41,357	8.9%

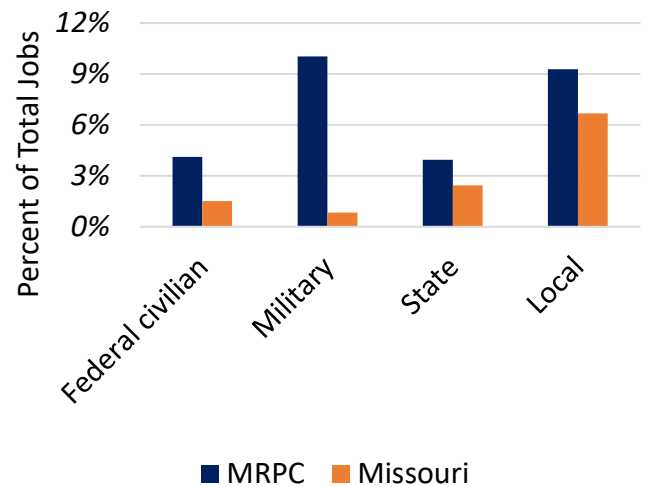
increase greater than the state average.

TOP INDUSTRIES

The Meramec Region’s economy is similar to the economy of the rural Ozarks in most areas. The agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism services (arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services) sector is about average for the Missouri Ozarks. Rural areas typically have higher government employment than metropolitan areas, but government and government related sectors in the Meramec Region contribute 38.1% of the region’s GDP. In addition, government and government related industries contribute a higher percent of the GDP than employment, whereas in Missouri on average all levels of government contribute to a higher percentage of jobs than the GDP. This means government jobs in the Meramec Region are more impactful per job than they are in the rest of Missouri. The Meramec Region sees a higher level of employment at every level of government compared to the state average.

The second most impactful sector to the Meramec Region’s economy is manufacturing. Manufacturing makes up 7.4% more jobs in the Meramec Region, however, it contributes nearly the same to the GDP as it does in the rest of Missouri. The ratio of job contribution to GDP contribution in Missouri is

Government Employment by Level of Government: 2022



Figures X Source: Lightcast Region Report

1.60, whereas for the Meramec Region it is 1.45. There are several reasons why manufacturing firms move to rural areas. Historically, the reason manufacturers moved to rural areas was the lower wages in rural area’s less competitive job markets. The main exception is manufacturers which directly consume local raw goods, such as charcoal plants. Additionally, rural areas often sacrifice more in tax breaks to attract companies. The lower wages and tax breaks can lead to less money staying in the local economy.

Economic Contribution by Industry: 2022					
Industries	GDP Contribution		Job Contribution		
	MRPC	Missouri	MRPC	Missouri	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	0.8%	1.2%	5.7%	2.8%	
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	
Utilities	0.5%	1.5%	0.1%	0.3%	
Construction	3.0%	4.0%	4.6%	5.5%	
Manufacturing	11.8%	12.0%	8.1%	7.5%	
Wholesale trade	1.9%	6.1%	1.7%	3.5%	
Retail trade	6.7%	5.9%	10.2%	9.8%	
Transportation and warehousing	2.7%	3.4%	3.9%	4.8%	
Information	0.7%	4.3%	0.6%	1.5%	
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	9.7%	19.5%	6.7%	11.2%	
Professional and business services	4.4%	14.8%	3.5%	13.1%	
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	7.1%	10.4%	5.3%	14.0%	
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	3.7%	4.1%	12.1%	14.3%	
Government and government enterprises	38.1%	10.7%	27.4%	11.4%	

Figures X Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis Personal Income and Employment

Employment Growth by Industry

Industries	MRPC			Missouri		
	2018	2022	Change (%)	2018	2022	Change (%)
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	5,848	5,636	-3.6%	109,314	108,201	-1.0%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	231	71	-69.3%	7,459	7,921	6.2%
Utilities	29	147	406.9%	12,231	12,203	-0.2%
Construction	4,277	4,513	5.5%	194,211	216,462	11.5%
Manufacturing	7,840	8,002	2.1%	286,990	295,203	2.9%
Wholesale trade	1,551	1,653	6.6%	130,914	138,827	6.0%
Retail trade	9,342	10,051	7.6%	382,482	386,934	1.2%
Transportation and warehousing	3,097	3,842	24.1%	142,563	189,914	33.2%
Information	542	564	4.1%	56,801	59,870	5.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing	5,072	6,602	30.2%	364,032	441,239	21.2%
Professional and business services	3,537	3,459	-2.2%	507,881	514,110	1.2%
Educational services, health care, and social assistance	6,721	5,206	-22.5%	542,213	550,386	1.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	11,815	11,890	0.6%	568,272	562,746	-1.0%
Government and government enterprises	29,320	27,001	-7.9%	472,007	450,379	-4.6%
Total Employment	67,504	71,609	6.1%	3,777,370	3,934,395	4.2%

Figure X Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Employment in the Meramec Region is growing faster than in Missouri. The fastest growing sector, with significant employment, in the Meramec Region is the financial (finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing) sector. The second fastest growing significant sector is transportation and warehousing. Both sectors are predominantly concentrated in metropolitan areas and employ more people on average in Missouri than in the Meramec Region.

The sector which shrank the most since 2018 was the educational services, health care, and social assistance sector. The sector shrank by 22%, which matches the decrease seen in primary care physicians over the same period. The government sector shrank and fell at a rate faster than the Missouri average. The government employment share of all jobs fell from 43.4% in 2018 to 37.7% in 2022.

While the region's most important sector did shrink, the rapid increase in employment in the

financial sector and transportation and warehousing sector means the region's economy is diversifying. The region's economy is growing less reliant on decisions the region has little control over in Jefferson City and the nation's capital. The diversification of the region's economy could mean the economy is going to become more stable in the future. On the other hand, new jobs in the financial sector and transportation and warehousing may not be paying the same as the lost government jobs, and therefore the positive impact could be negligible.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

In contrast to employment growth, Gross Domestic Product in the Meramec Region has slowed since 2021. The sum of all sales/use taxes in the Meramec Region fell by 12.7% from 2022 to 2023. The decrease in GDP and sales tracks with the decrease in inflation adjusted median incomes between 2020 and 2022. The inflation adjusted GDP of Missouri in contrast has grown consistently

since 2020. The fall in inflation adjusted GDP is a local issue.

Meramec Region Gross Domestic Product in Current Dollars (Thousands): 2018-2022

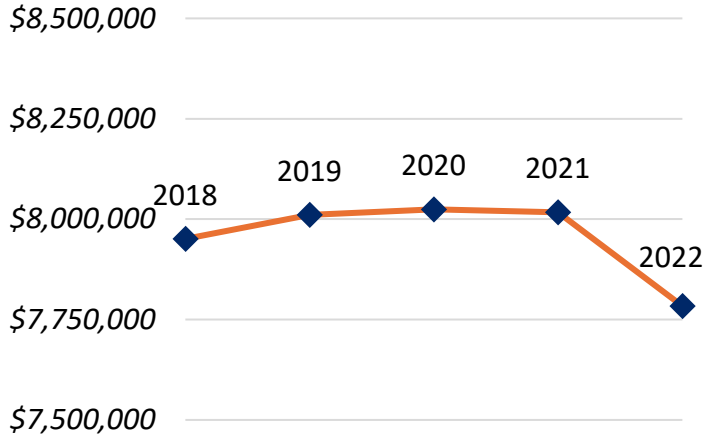


Figure X Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis GDP Summary

The decrease in GDP is consistent across all MRPC’s counties. From 2021 to 2022 the only county to surpass the state’s growth rate was Osage County. In the same period, only one other county had positive GDP growth, Phelps County, and the growth was under 1%. Dent and Pulaski Counties experienced a 7.6% and 6.2% decrease in inflation adjusted GDP between 2021 and 2022 respectively. Even more concerning, the economy of Pulaski County was better during COVID-19, and the GDP has fallen by 10% since 2020. Pulaski County was the only county in the state with a GDP above \$1 billion to experience a 10% GDP decrease since COVID-19 and Pulaski County experienced the largest raw drop in GDP in the entire state, a drop of \$242,000,000 in GDP. The drop in GDP was 2.5 times larger than the next highest raw drop in GDP of any Missouri county. Pulaski County has had the 13th worst economic recovery since COVID-19 out of all Missouri counties. Dent County has experienced a similarly dismal economic performance. The economy fell by 8% in the same period and Dent County has had the 17th worst

economic recovery of all Missouri counties since COVID-19.

The most likely explanation for the poor economic recovery in the Meramec Region lies in the 8% drop in government jobs. These jobs were likely high paying and contributed a lot more to the economy than jobs in other industries. Government jobs contribute to 38% of the GDP, but only make up 27% of all jobs, so when these jobs are lost, they impact the economy more than when jobs in other industries are lost.

Sales/Uses Taxes in the Meramec Region in Current Dollars (Thousands): 2018-2023

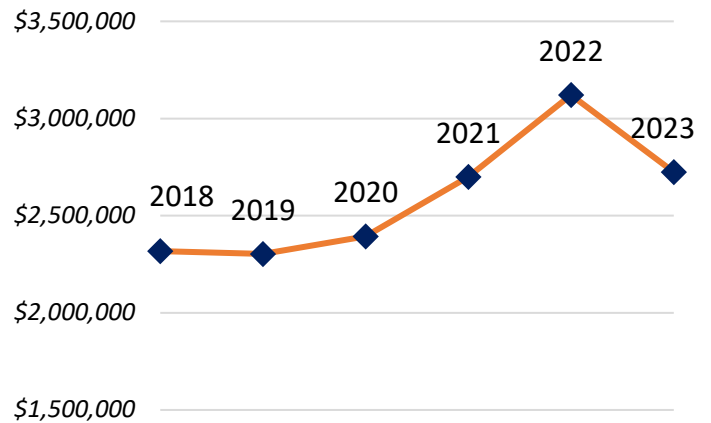


Figure X Source: Missouri Department of Revenue Public Sales Tax Report

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The labor force participation rate in the Meramec Region is lower than the Missouri and National averages. The only age group where the labor force participation rate is higher is among individuals 16 to 19 years old, likely because the region’s population is poorer and as a result young people need to start working earlier. At every other age cohort however, the labor force participation rate is significantly lower in the Meramec Region. The largest difference between the Meramec Region and the national and state average is among the 60 to 64 years of age cohort.

Labor Force Participation Rate by Gender: 2022

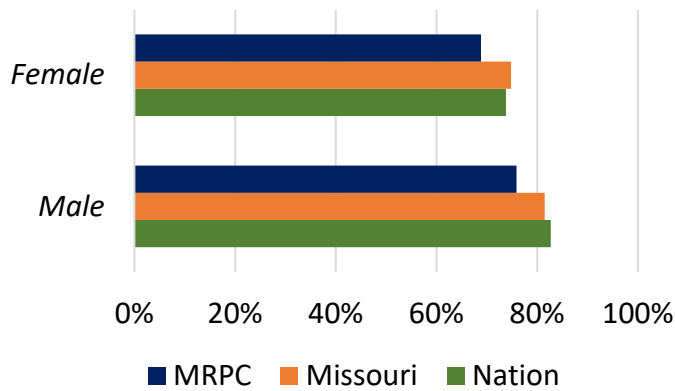


Figure X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022 Table: S2301

Labor Force Participation Rate by Level of Education for Population 25 Years and Older: 2022

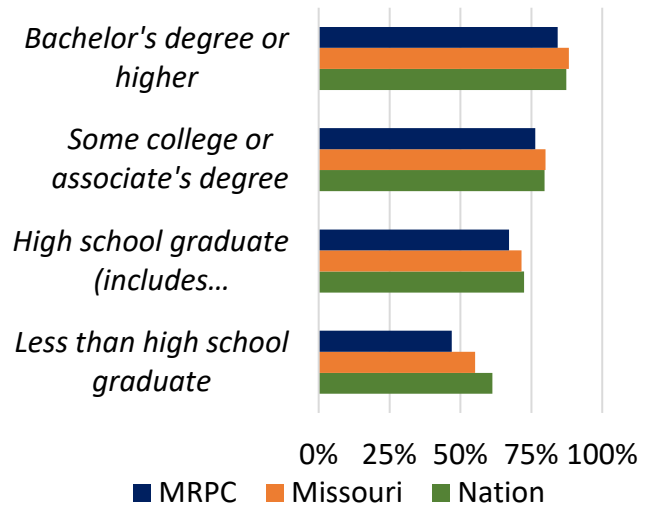


Figure X Source: ACS5-Year Estimates 2022 Table: S2301

The Meramec Region has a comparable, yet lower, labor force participation rate at every level of education, except among individuals who didn't graduate high school. The labor force participation rate for individuals who didn't graduate high school is 24% less in the Meramec Region than it is in the nation. 10.8% of the Meramec Region's population didn't graduate high school, compared to 10.4% of Americans and 8.7% of Missourians. The likely explanation is older people in the Meramec Region have a lower labor force participation rate. In Missouri the percent of people above the age of 65 who graduated high school is 88.9%, and in the Meramec Region 84% of people older than 65 graduated high school.

The labor force participation rate by gender in the Meramec Region is consistently lower for both men and women. The gap between the Meramec Regions and the national labor force participation rate for women is about 5% and for men the gap is 6.8%. The gap between the state participation rate and Meramec Region's for women is about 6% and about 5.6% for men. The gap between the labor force participation rate for men and women is 7% in the Meramec Region, 9% in the nation, and the gap is 6.7% in Missouri. Women participate in the labor force marginally more in Missouri and the Meramec Region than in the nation.

Labor Force Participation Rate by Age Group: 2022

	Nation	Missouri	MRPC
16 to 19 years	39.3%	44.8%	46.5%
20 to 24 years	75.1%	76.6%	73.3%
25 to 29 years	83.6%	85.4%	82.5%
30 to 34 years	83.6%	84.2%	79.8%
35 to 44 years	83.3%	83.9%	80.0%
45 to 54 years	81.7%	81.6%	75.6%
55 to 59 years	73.5%	71.7%	64.5%
60 to 64 years	58.4%	56.2%	43.4%
65 to 74 years	26.8%	25.2%	19.2%
75 years and over	7.0%	6.6%	5.6%

Figure X Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates 2022 Table: S2301

LABOR MARKET

The Meramec Region has experienced a higher unemployment rate than Missouri for about 75% of the time between January 2018 and June 2024. The last time the Meramec Region had a lower unemployment rate than Missouri was February of 2022. However, the average gap between the Missouri and Meramec Region unemployment rates has only been about 0.2% since March 2022. However, in 2024 the Meramec Region's unemployment rate has been nearly half a percent higher than Missouri's. The only period where the Meramec Region had a significantly lower

unemployment rate than Missouri was during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Meramec Region’s post-Covid economic performance, however, has been lackluster. The unemployment rate is higher than the state average, the GDP has shrunk, and inflation adjusted median incomes haven’t changed and are changing at a rate well-below the Missouri average.

Meramec Region Unemployment Rate: January 2018-June 2024

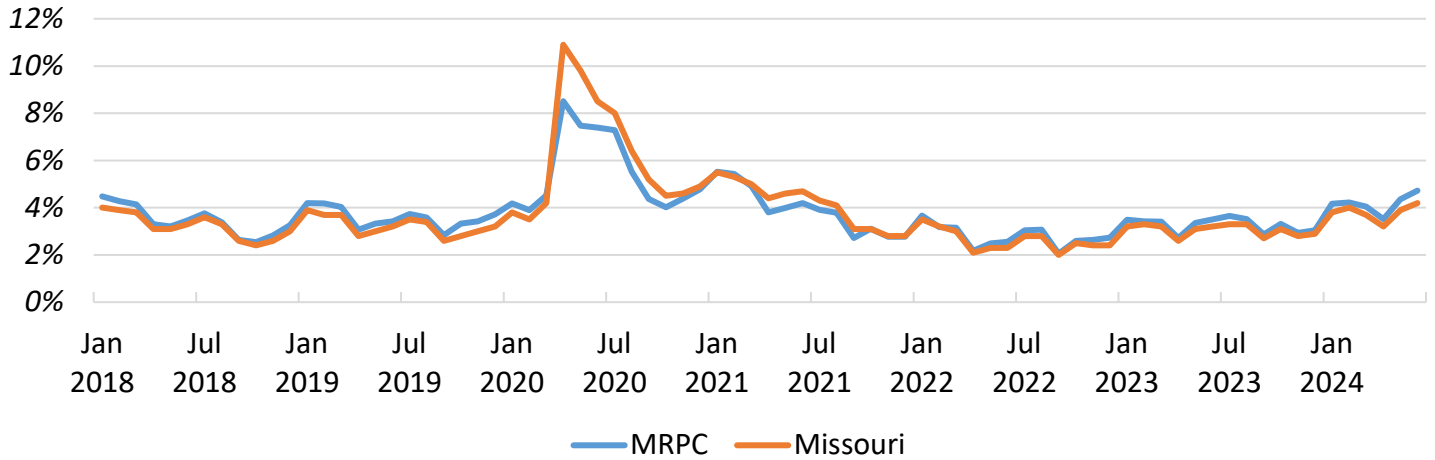


Figure X Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Unemployment Rate (U)

EQUITY & RESILIENCY

EQUITY

Throughout the planning process, the CEDS Advisory Committee and MRPC emphasized the importance of incorporating equity into economic development planning by ensuring that all residents benefit from a stronger region. Traditionally, economic development strategies have overlooked the needs of certain communities, leading to disparities in economic opportunity. Considerations for building equity into the CEDS include:

- **Equity in the Process:** From the beginning of the update, MRPC was transparent with the CEDS Advisory Committee and the public regarding the purpose of incorporating equity into the planning process. MRPC worked to identify regional stakeholders that could represent diversity from all types of backgrounds and reviewed statistics that discuss social vulnerability in the region.
- **Equity in the Document:** MRPC and the CEDS Advisory Committee worked to identify systemic changes by writing objectives and strategies that support the needs of all communities.

Counties with high levels of poverty, lack of transportation, and limited affordable housing are more susceptible to economic and natural disasters. Social vulnerability refers to the demographic and socioeconomic factors (poverty, lack of access to transportation, and housing issues) that negatively impact communities contending with hazards and other community-level stressors. These stressors can include natural or human-caused disasters (tornadoes and flooding) or disease outbreaks (COVID-19).

The following map depicts the Social Vulnerability Index for each county within Missouri. The Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) is a tool that uses U.S. Census data to measure the social vulnerability of

census tracts and counties. The SVI ranks each tract on 14–16 social factors, which are grouped into four themes:

- **Socioeconomic:** Includes factors like poverty, household composition, and disability
- **Demographic:** Includes factors like age, English language proficiency, and minority status
- **Housing:** Includes factors like crowding, mobile homes, and multi-unit structures
- **Transportation:** Includes factors like lack of vehicle access and group quarters

Social Vulnerability Index Map (SVI)

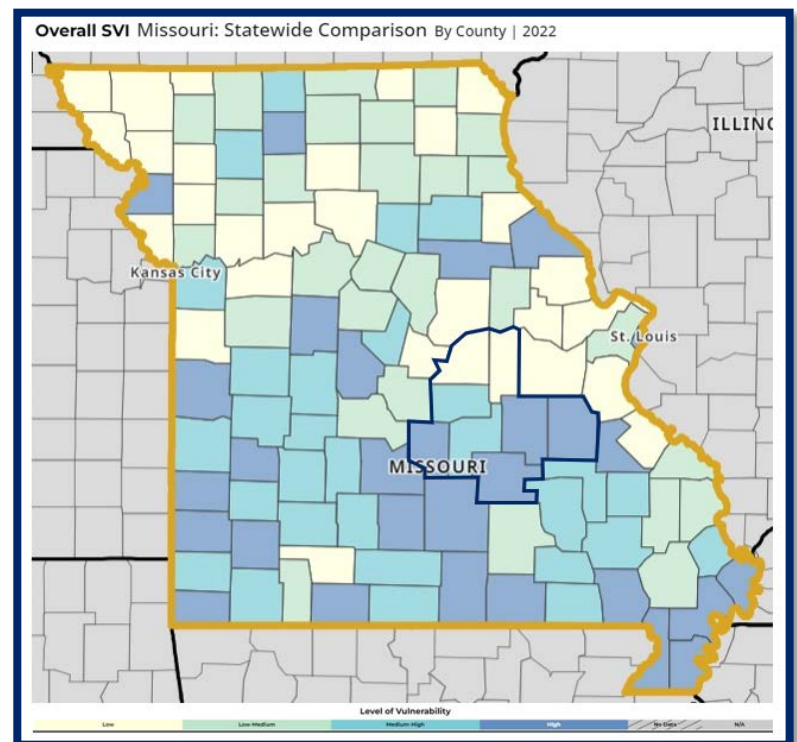


Figure X Source:

https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/interactive_map.html

The darker blue indicates that the area is extremely disadvantaged in the face of a natural or economic disaster, while the yellow indicates a low level of

vulnerability. Scores range from zero (lowest risk) to one (highest vulnerability). As highlighted on the map, the eight-county region shows that a majority of the counties are in the medium-high to high range of vulnerability (light and dark blue) as compared to the state. Washington County has the highest score at 0.9035 out of one. Only two counties (Osage and Gasconade) are in the low-risk category with scores of zero and 0.193, respectively. No counties in the region are in the low-medium category (green).

As depicted in the map, residents within the southern half of the region and state are disproportionately impacted as a result of natural or man-made disasters. More in-depth analysis into each county's areas of risk

RESILIENCY

Economic prosperity is linked to an area's ability to withstand, prevent, or quickly recover from major disruptions to its underlying economic base. In conjunction with the 2018 CEDS revision and 2021 update, the 2024 CEDS concentrates on identifying ways to respond to impacts to the region's economy, as well as noting the ways the region addresses hazard mitigation.

The MRPC region continues to actively prepare to mitigate economic impacts from weather, employment, and disaster-related shocks with both steady-state initiatives, those which plan for and implement resilience, and responsive initiatives, the establishment of information networks. Since 2018, MRPC has worked on a number of steady-state and responsive initiatives to support economic resiliency in the region.

Steady-State initiatives include:

- Hazard Mitigation Plans per County – each plan encourages businesses to develop emergency response and resiliency plans specific to their organization
 - Pulaski County – 2021
 - Phelps and Gasconade Counties – 2021
 - Crawford, Osage, and Washington Counties – 2023
 - Dent County – 2023

- Maries County - 2024



Dent County Hazard Mitigation Planning Meeting 2022

- Meramec Regional Emergency Planning Committee (MREPC)
 - Hazardous Materials Plan – annual updates
- Worked with Phelps County on a disaster mitigation grants for demolition of damaged structures in the floodplain – completed in 2021
- Region I Homeland Security Oversight Committee (HSOC)
 - Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) – 2022 with a partial update in 2024
 - Homeland Security Response Team (HSRT) – Rolla, MO
- Comprehensive and Strategic Planning with local communities – Hermann, Belle, Bourbon, Potosi, Crocker, Steelville

Responsive economic resilience initiatives include:

- Succession Planning for the organization and working with region on similar plans
- Emergency trainings sponsored by the Region I HSOC and Meramec Regional Emergency Planning Committee (MREPC)
- Regional exercises coordinated through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)

One of the major economic impacts to the Meramec Region includes natural disaster events, such as flooding, tornadoes or pandemics. Since 2018, the Meramec Region has experienced additional major flooding events, as well as dealing with the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

MRPC received funding from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) in August of 2020 to support economic resilience efforts across the Meramec Region directly related to COVID-19. In response to the impacts of the pandemic, MRPC completed an update and addendum of the CEDS in 2021. The CEDS Advisory Committee was convened to update the strategies and action items over the course of several months. A separate After-Action Report relative to the pandemic was created to highlight the health implications and economic impacts to the region. A copy of both reports is located on the MRPC website.

Climate change impacts also have long-term implications for the region. The Climate Explorer Tool (managed by NOAA's Climate Program Office and hosted by the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center (NEMAC) at the University of North Carolina Asheville) gives users a way to check how climate conditions in the United States are projected to change over the coming decades. The information is available for all counties in the United States. <https://crt-climate-explorer.nemac.org/>

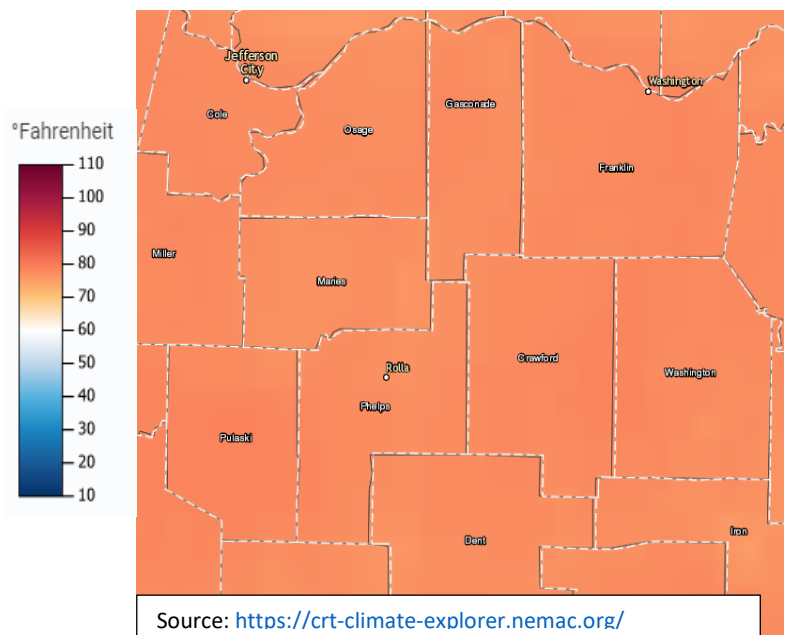
The online tool graphs projections for two possible futures: one in which humans drastically reduce and stabilize global emissions and one in which the United States continues increasing emissions through the end of this 21st century. For purposes of county level review, the following information looked at historical trends from 1961 to 1990 and the increased emissions projection for 2020 to 2090. Based on projected data, three main climate concerns are raised for the eight-county region: intense rainstorms, extreme temperatures and dry spells.

The total average annual precipitation is projected to increase 5.1% over the same period. The

average annual rainfall from 1961 to 1990 was 40.9 inches, whereas it is projected to increase to 43 inches annually between 2020 to 2090. Increased rainfall can lead to more flooding, especially along the region's many riverways. Floods impact residences, local travel, and close access to major highways and interstates such as I-44 and Highway 63. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) estimated in 2018 that the closure of I-44 has an economic impact of approximately \$3 million dollars per day to Missouri residents. As a result of these flood events, MRPC has worked with local officials on grants to demolish structures, buyout repetitive loss properties, and improve water crossings and drainage infrastructure. The region continues to work on steady-state initiatives that help coordinate recovery efforts and emergency response to road closures and other significant obstacles during and after floods.

Graphs show that the average daily temperature for the region is expected to rise 16.1% by 2090. From 1961 to 1990, the average temperature was 66.6 degrees, rising to 77.3 degrees from 2020 to 2090. Extreme heat may impact seasonal patterns and have negative impacts on farming operations.

Average Daily Maximum Temp 2020 - 2090

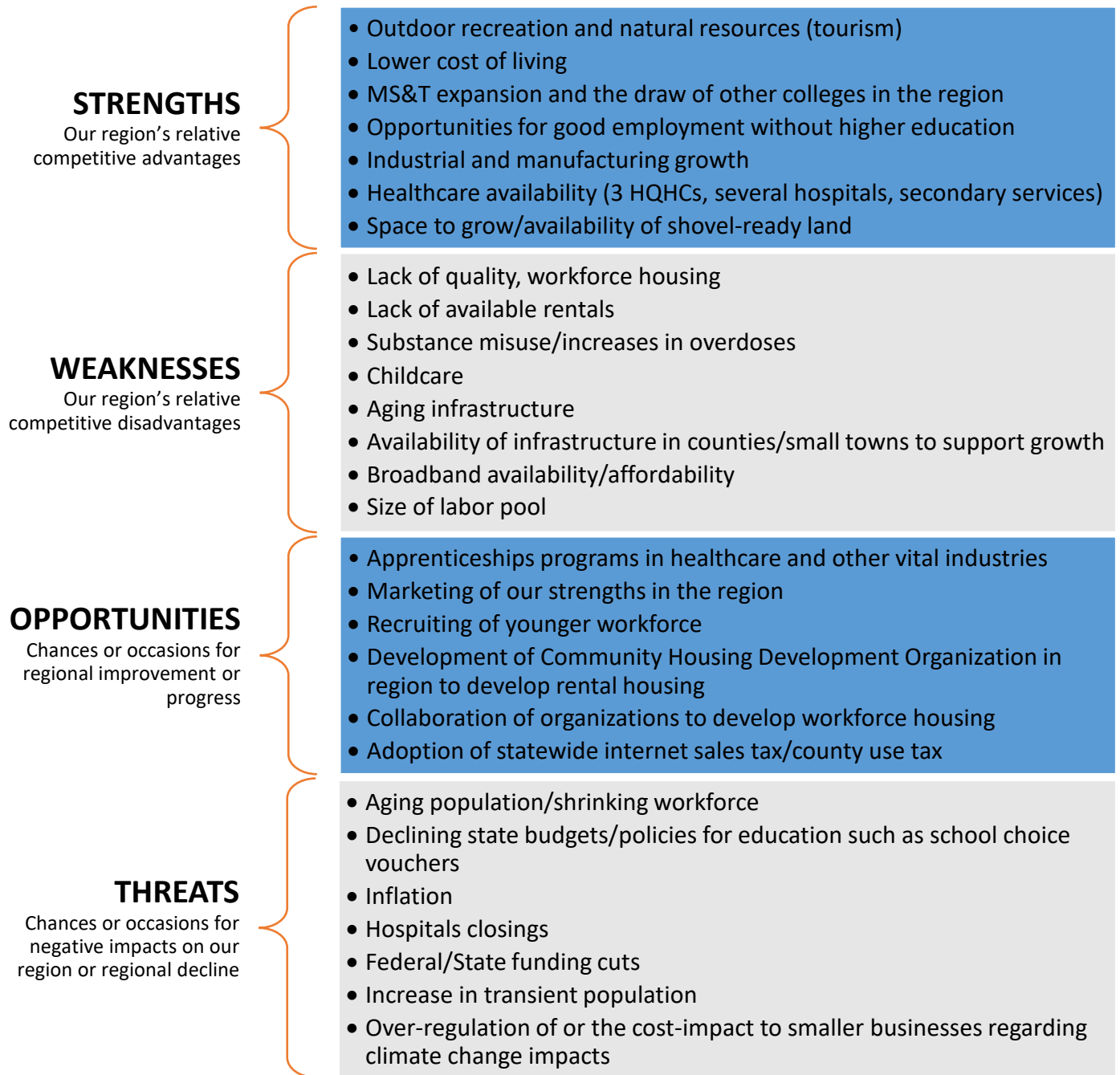


Dry days, defined as the number of days per year with less than 0.01 inches of rain, is projected to rise 3.9% by 2090. Past counts show an average of 196.9 dry days for the region between 1961 and 1990. This will increase to approximately 204.5 days per year by 2090. The potential for longer periods of drought will raise the risk of wildfires, as well as impact crop production in the region.

MRPC continues to implement steady-state and responsive initiatives through various committees and grant work with local communities. The Meramec Region will continue discussions on the state of the regional economy, the status of projects which further the four main goals of the CEDS and identify any resiliency efforts that improve the built and natural environment while decreasing the negative impacts of climate change.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A SWOT Analysis is an in-depth review of the Meramec Region’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). It acts as a strategic planning tool to ensure that a clear objective is identified by a comprehensive understanding of the region’s capabilities and capacity. The SWOT Analysis helps the region classify its competitive advantages, while also identifying other factors that negatively impact the region and impede it from reaching its full potential.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

The goals, objectives and strategies identified in this section were based on items identified in the SWOT Analysis, as well as input from various regional stakeholders during several meetings completed throughout 2024.

FOUR GOALS FOR THE MERAMEC REGION

1. Seek expansion of the regional economy through diversified business growth
2. Maintain, modernize and expand infrastructure to make the region more competitive for economic development
3. Promote revitalized, healthy, safe and resilient communities
4. Create a robust workforce pipeline to satisfy the needs of the business community

GOAL 1: SEEK EXPANSION OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY THROUGH DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND WORKFORCE TRAINING

Expanding the regional economy hinges on cultivating a diverse business and industrial landscape coupled with a skilled workforce. By attracting a variety of industries, regions can mitigate economic fluctuations reliant on a single sector. Simultaneously, fostering industrial growth creates jobs and stimulates innovation. To ensure these ventures thrive, robust workforce training programs are essential. Equipping the local population with the necessary skills to fill emerging roles not only supports business expansion but also enhances the overall quality of life for residents.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Retain established and attract emerging businesses through strategic initiatives and a skilled and talented workforce

STRATEGIES

1.1.1: Educate businesses on available training resources, including programs to improve workers' soft skills and upskilling, as well as available assets and programs to address industry apprenticeships

1.1.2: Educate existing businesses of available assets and programs, including promotion of industry apprenticeships, internships, etc.

1.1.3: Promote industrial sites and available land, including Certified Ready sites and encourage development/expansion of industrial parks with associated infrastructure



(Aerial of Washington County Industrial Park)

1.1.4: Address the Prime Age Employment Gap (PAEG) through assessment of needs in the region

1.1.5: Support expansion of higher education opportunities (MST, ECC, etc.)

OBJECTIVE 1.2: Focus on unique opportunities to sustain, diversify and expand employment and investment in the region using the region's natural resources and assets

STRATEGIES

1.2.1: Encourage the development of new businesses associated with and along the Rock Island Trail State Park



(view of Rock Island Trail through Belle, MO)

1.2.2: Assist with efforts to develop the processing of critical minerals in the region and further develop mining opportunities

1.2.3: Encourage opportunities to expand forestry products, including white oak production and barrel making

1.2.4: Promote tourism and agritourism opportunities, including the Route 66 100-year anniversary celebration and Naturally Meramec



(view of Route 66 sign next to Pulaski County Courthouse)

OBJECTIVE 1.3: Promote and advocate for the businesses and residents of the region

STRATEGIES

1.3.1: Complete Military Installation Resiliency Review (MIRR) and Housing Study

1.3.2: Prioritize and share information on regional needs and opportunities that exist, including legislative and transportation needs

1.3.3: Support the maintenance and growth of Fort Leonard Wood

1.3.4: Regularly participate in economic development organizations in the region, including Sustainable Ozarks Partnership (SOP), Rolla Regional Economic Commission (RREC), etc.

1.3.5: Advocate for regional needs by meeting with state and federal legislative liaisons

GOAL 2: MAINTAIN, MODERNIZE AND EXPAND INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAKE THE REGION MORE COMPETITIVE FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Maintaining, modernizing, and expanding a region's infrastructure is essential for sustained growth and quality of life. Aging infrastructure

requires constant upkeep to prevent failures and ensure safety, while technological advancements necessitate modernization to improve efficiency and sustainability. Expanding infrastructure, such as transportation networks and public utilities, is crucial to accommodate population growth, attract businesses, and enhance accessibility. A well-planned and executed infrastructure strategy is vital to create a thriving and resilient community.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Maintain awareness of infrastructure needs within the region

STRATEGIES

2.1.1: Encourage communities to set utility rates that consider funding for future improvements

2.1.2: Meet with local officials to develop a full list of specific infrastructure needs to include broadband, water, sewer, etc. by city and county



(Mine Street Bridge in Potosi, MO)

2.1.3: Work with local governments on asset management utilizing GIS and other tools

2.1.4: Encourage the development of Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs)

2.1.5: Share information on funding opportunities including TIF, CID, NID, TDD, bond issues, grants, etc.

2.1.6: Prioritize specific road/bridge and multimodal projects in the region, including addressing the needs of I-44, 63, 50, 21 & 8, Rail and Air

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Modernize infrastructure to improve the efficiency and reliability, and to

enhance economic development and public well-being

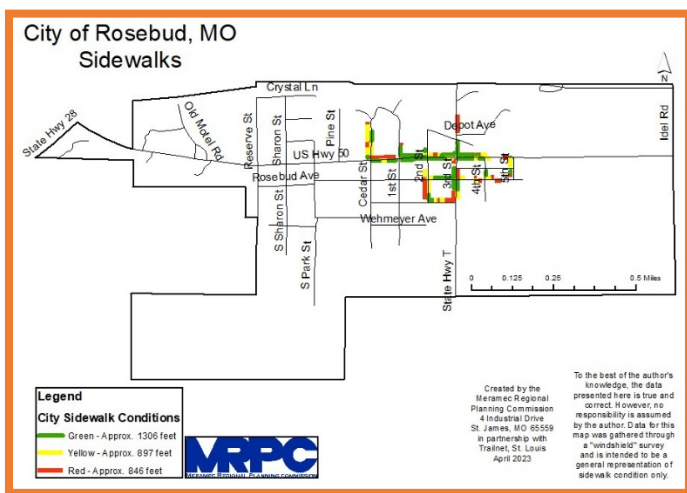
STRATEGIES

- 2.2.1:** Improve existing transportation systems to provide updated safety enhancements
- 2.2.2:** Support the development and use of green energy/geothermal
- 2.2.3:** Construct infrastructure updates related to autonomous/electric vehicles, such as EV charging stations
- 2.2.4:** Assist local communities to find funding to diversify their energy supply to include redundancy in backup systems and sustainable sources such as solar, wind, etc.
- 2.2.5:** Encourage entities to incorporate resiliency in the design of infrastructure upgrades
- 2.2.6:** Assist counties in obtaining funding to upgrade water/sewer systems to meet state and federal standards

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Expand the capacity and reach of infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the region

STRATEGIES

- 2.3.1:** Encourage communities to make improvements to walkability/ADA accessibility



(Sidewalk map for Rosebud, MO)

- 2.3.2:** Promote the increase of transportation funding in order to address major system improvements
- 2.3.3:** Urge internet service providers to seek funding through Missouri’s BEAD program to support the expansion of broadband and the

- implementation of the Missouri Association of Council of Government’s (MACOG) Reid report
- 2.3.4:** Encourage centralized water/sewer systems and regionalization to the extent feasible
- 2.3.5:** Provide support to possible port development in the northern part of the region and the accompanying needs for improvements to Highway 19
- 2.3.6:** Improve transportation networks, including local freight routes and air to support growth of logistical and distribution industries
- 2.3.7:** Support public transit in the region including upgrades and expansion to infrastructure and vehicles that facilitate rural transit options

GOAL 3: PROMOTE REVITALIZED, HEALTHY, SAFE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

The Meramec Region considers a high quality of life to be one of its best assets. This standard of living includes safe neighborhoods, quality schools, outdoor recreation, tourism, and a low cost of living. Oftentimes, these local amenities greatly impact a region’s ability to retain and attract new workers. Ensuring that the region has numerous employment options in strong communities with quality housing choices, safe neighborhoods with excellent public schools, and indoor/outdoor recreation is an integral component of the CEDS. The following objectives and strategies focus on several components that directly impact the strength of our region.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Build a resilient region that can effectively respond to challenges and capitalize on opportunities, ensuring long-term economic and social prosperity for all residents

STRATEGIES

- 3.1.1:** Encourage redundancy in infrastructure and prioritize improvements with involvement by state/federal agencies
- 3.1.2:** Implement floodplain regulations and adoption of new maps
- 3.1.3:** Identify flood prone areas that impact transportation in the region and maintain a list for improvements
- 3.1.4:** Expand broadband availability to ensure access during major weather events, etc.

3.1.5: Coordinate and share information from hazard mitigation/regional emergency plans and provide planning and technical assistance to implement strategies

3.1.6: Assist non-profits that help underserved communities and/or populations to obtain funding for programs, projects and equipment

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Provide quality, patient-centered healthcare in the region

STRATEGIES

3.2.1: Increase the number of primary healthcare providers ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare services for all residents (including SUD/ODU, women’s health, etc.)

3.2.2: Enhance early intervention strategies in healthcare by implementing comprehensive screening programs and proactive outreach initiatives, resulting in improved detection rates and timely interventions

3.2.3: Advocate to increase funding opportunities to county public health departments to better provide care for Missouri’s most underserved populations

3.2.4: Promote the widespread adoption and utilization of the 988-crisis hotline as the primary access point for mental health and crisis intervention services nationwide, ensuring seamless and immediate support for individuals experiencing mental health crises

3.2.5: Enhance transportation accessibility to mental and medical health facilities, reducing barriers to care and ensuring timely access for all individuals in the Meramec Region

3.2.6: Increase the reach of substance use prevention education programs in schools in the Meramec Region using evidence-based practices. (including Too Good for Drugs, Seeking Safety, etc.)

3.2.7: Secure sustainable funding for opioid-based consortiums to continue collaborative efforts in prevention, treatment and recovery support services

3.2.8: Develop and implement re-entry programs in county jails aimed at reducing recidivism rates and promoting successful community reintegration for inmates through structured rehabilitation, employment assistance and social support services

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Maintain a physical environment that supports healthy communities

STRATEGIES

3.3.1: Update the Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District solid waste plan to include programs addressing illegal dumping, the reduction of hard to recycle materials and new waste streams and the expansion of education and awareness programs for recycling, household hazardous waste, composting, waste reduction, etc.



(Illegal dump cleanup in Pulaski County 2024)

3.3.2: Secure funding to consider alternate heat sources for homes and improvements to the transportation system to ensure clean air

3.3.3: Encourage development of eco-friendly alternative energy programs that benefit the region, residents and underserved populations (such as solar, wind)

3.3.4: Encourage walkable communities and assist with the development and implementation of active transportation plans

(Osage County Jail Seeking Safety 2022)



OBJECTIVE 3.4: Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare options in the region

STRATEGIES

3.4.1: Assess the demand for childcare by identifying areas with shortages and desired program features (e.g., infant care, after-school programs) and identify solutions for filling the gaps

3.4.2: Encourage businesses to offer on-site childcare or partner with local providers to offer discounted rates for employees

3.4.3: Partner with educational institutions to offer apprenticeship programs or subsidized certifications to attract new workers and create a pipeline of qualified talent

3.4.4: Encourage the state to resolve program delivery issues for childcare subsidies to qualifying families and encourage participation

OBJECTIVE 3.5: Promote place-making within the region

STRATEGIES:

3.5.1: Educate residents about the link between community maintenance and property values, safety, and overall quality of life

3.5.2: Encourage regional counties and towns to participate in various community betterment programs such as Missouri Main Street program, downtown revitalization programs, demolition/cleanup programs

OBJECTIVE 3.6: Assist communities and counties with planning activities

STRATEGIES:

3.6.1: Encourage local communities to view comprehensive planning as a roadmap for the future by providing a clear vision, goals, and strategies for development

3.6.2: Collaborate with local communities to promote code enforcement and its benefits for a thriving residential and commercial environment

3.6.3: Encourage communities to use zoning to make local decisions about their development priorities

OBJECTIVE 3.7: Promote a coordinated regional approach to address the needs of the unhoused population

STRATEGIES:

3.7.1: Advocate for increased funding for programs like HUD's Supportive Housing Programs

3.7.2: Work with each county's resource providers to equip communities and individuals/families with housing needs

3.7.3: Encourage communities to prioritize permanent, supportive/transitional housing with on-site or linked social services

3.7.4: Form a joint taskforce to help reduce homelessness, including other regional Public Housing Administrations (PHAs), US Housing and Urban Development, etc.

3.7.5: Develop outreach programs specifically targeting older adults at risk of homelessness, including those facing eviction or living in unsafe conditions



(View of The Mission in Rolla, MO)

3.7.6: Maintain resource list of service providers

GOAL 4: EXPAND AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL HOUSING SUPPLY TO PROVIDE SAFE, EQUITABLE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE MERAMEC REGION

Rural areas are experiencing a housing shortage, hindering growth and development. Limited housing options deter potential residents and businesses from relocating to these communities, stifling economic opportunities. Existing residents often face challenges finding suitable and affordable housing, leading to overcrowding and substandard living conditions. Increasing the housing stock in rural areas is crucial to attract new residents, support local businesses, and improve the overall quality of life for current inhabitants.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: Engage local stakeholders and refine goals for the regional housing supply

STRATEGIES:

4.1.1: Pursue funding for the development of housing studies and implement results of existing/in-process studies around the region

4.1.2: Work with communities on mix of housing/zoning codes, to include supportive local codes for unhoused populations

4.1.3: Host housing forums in each county to identify unique needs of local communities

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Identify funding opportunities for residential infrastructure and the renovation of existing housing

STRATEGIES:

4.2.1: Advocate for housing development programs and use of financing tools at the state and federal level

4.2.2: Encourage the use of MO DED-CDBG funds for public infrastructure development for affordable/workforce housing

4.2.3: Utilize a variety of financing tools for the construction of housing (i.e. TIF/NID/CID/Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO), Missouri Housing Development Corporation (MHDC) tax credits, etc.)

4.2.4: Leverage public/private partnerships for housing construction

4.2.5: Coordinate new residential development with the availability and capacity of critical infrastructure

OBJECTIVE 4.3: Expand the availability of developable land for residential development

STRATEGIES:

4.3.1: Work with communities on the development of growth/annexation plans for new housing developments

4.3.2: Promote CDBG demolition grants and assist communities in the development of writing grants

4.3.3: Encourage the redevelopment of infill sites to provide new residential units within city boundaries

OBJECTIVE 4.4: Increase the availability of affordable housing units within the region

STRATEGIES:

4.4.1: Recognize the need for and encouragement of developers to build workforce housing

4.4.2: Update building and zoning codes to meet evolving community needs

4.4.3: Work with non-profits on the development of affordable housing and upgrading existing affordable housing stock

4.4.4: Recruit more landlords to participate in the region's HUD program

4.4.5: Encourage the utilization of the first-time homebuyers' program



(First-time Homebuyers' Program participant)

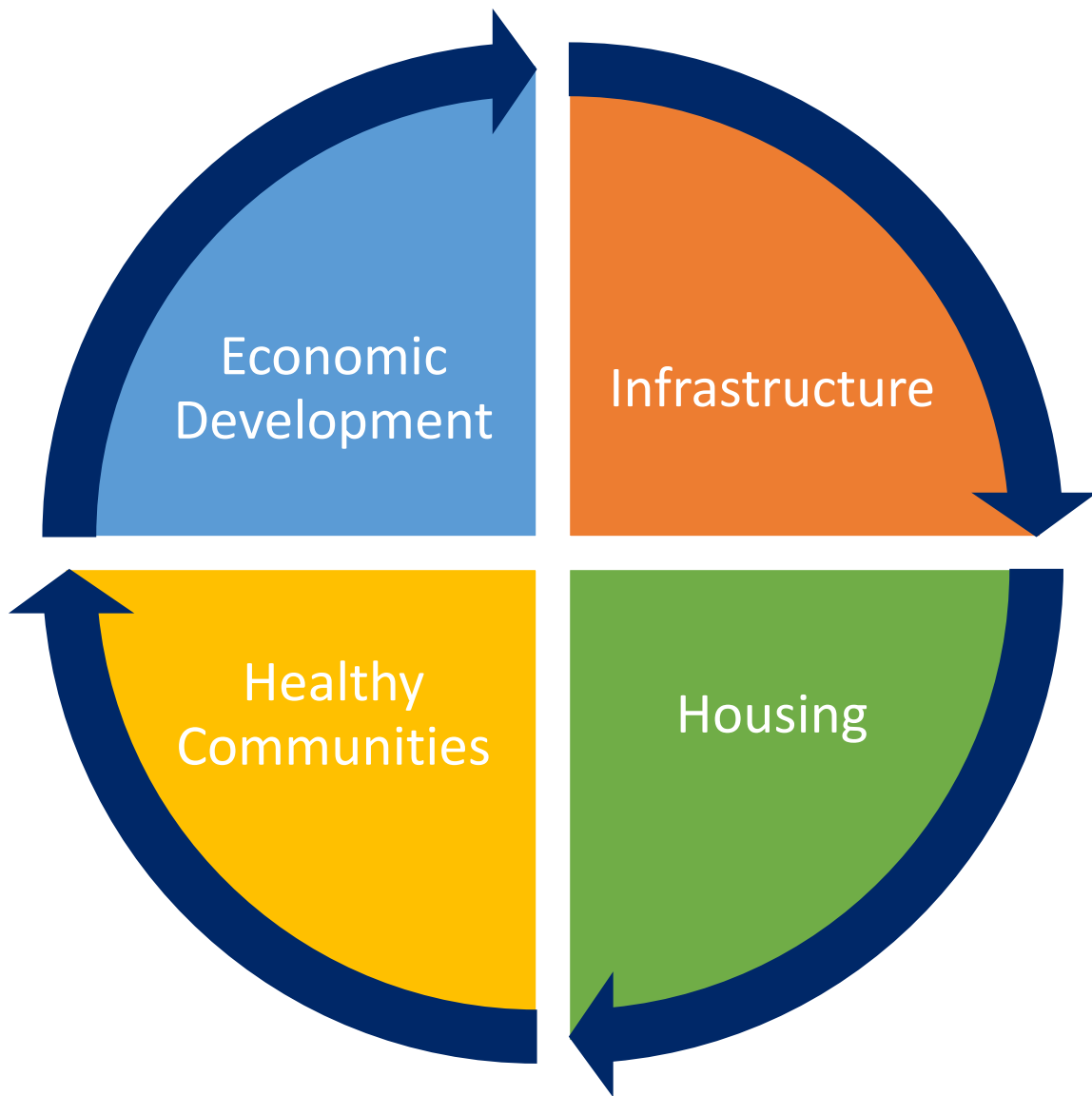
4.4.6: Promote the continued use of high school building trades programs

4.4.7: Coordinate partnerships for the construction of affordable and mixed-use senior housing developments

ACTION PLAN

The interconnectedness of economic development, infrastructure, community vitality and housing is undeniable. A thriving economy requires robust infrastructure to support business growth and facilitate the movement of goods and people. Conversely, a well-developed infrastructure can attract businesses and investment, stimulating economic activity. At the heart of these systems are the region's communities, where residents, businesses, and institutions interact. A strong sense of community fosters a desirable living and working environment, attracting and retaining talent, which in turn drives economic growth.

Access to safe, affordable housing is a cornerstone of community well-being and economic stability. Housing shortages or high costs can hinder workforce attraction and retention, limit consumer spending, and strain social services. Therefore, a comprehensive action plan must address housing needs in conjunction with economic development and infrastructure improvements. By creating vibrant, inclusive communities with diverse housing options, the region can build a foundation for long-term prosperity.



Goal 1:

Economic Development

Seek expansion of the regional economy through diversified business and industrial growth and workforce training

Partners and Stakeholders

- MRPC
- Sustainable Ozarks Partnership (SOP)
- Fort Leonard Wood (FLW)
- Local Governments
- Economic Development Entities
- Central Workforce Development Board
- School Districts
- Local Banks
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Other Regional Partners



Goal 1: Economic Development	Seek expansion of the regional economy through diversified business and industrial growth and workforce training
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OBJECTIVE 1.1:	Retain established and attract emerging businesses through strategic initiatives and a skilled and talented workforce	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1.1 Educate businesses on available training resources, including programs to improve workers’ soft skills and upskilling, as well as available assets and programs to address industry apprenticeships 1.1.2 Educate existing businesses of available assets and programs, including promotion of industry apprenticeships, internships, etc. 1.1.3 Promote industrial sites and available land, including Certified Ready sites and encourage development/expansion of industrial parks with associated infrastructure 1.1.4 Address the Prime Age Employment Gap (PAEG) through assessment of needs in the region 1.1.5 Support expansion of higher education opportunities (MST, ECC, etc.) 		
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS: Provide grant writing and loan assistance to businesses in the region	

OBJECTIVE 1.2:	Focus on unique opportunities to sustain, diversify and expand employment and investment in the region using the region’s natural resources and assets	TIMELINE: Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2.1 Encourage the development of new businesses associated with and along the Rock Island Trail State Park 1.2.2 Assist with efforts to develop the processing of critical minerals in the region and further develop mining opportunities 1.2.3 Encourage opportunities to expand forestry products, including white oak production and barrel making 1.2.4 Promote tourism and agritourism opportunities, including the Route 66 100-year anniversary celebration and Naturally Meramec 		
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS: Provide grant writing assistance for trail development (Rock Island State Park, etc.), Create a focus report for the mining industry, Maintain Naturally Meramec website	

OBJECTIVE 1.3:	Promote and advocate for the businesses and residents of the region	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:		

- 1.3.1 Complete Military Installation Resiliency Review (MIRR) and Housing Study
- 1.3.2 Prioritize and share information on regional needs and opportunities that exist, including legislative and transportation needs
- 1.3.3 Support the maintenance and growth of Fort Leonard Wood
- 1.3.4 Regularly participate in economic development organizations in the region, including Sustainable Ozarks Partnership (SOP), Rolla Regional Economic Commission (RREC), etc.
- 1.3.5 Advocate for regional needs by meeting with state and federal legislative liaisons

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS: Assist in finding funding to implement recommendations from the MIRR & Housing Study; Regular attendance at meetings for economic development organizations and advocacy events; Create state/federal priorities reports
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Goal 1:

Economic Development

FUNDING RESOURCES

Delta Regional Authority

State's Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP)

Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)

U.S. Department of Defense

Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) grants

U.S. Economic Development Administration

Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA)

EDA Public Works

MO Department of Economic Development

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

Broadband Equity Access and Development (BEAD)

Digital Equity Act – Broadband (DEA)

MO Department of Natural Resources

Small Borrower Loan Program

State Revolving Fund

MO Department of Transportation

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

MoDOT Cost-Share

Governor's Cost-Share

MO Development Finance Board

Infrastructure Loan Program

Public Entity Loan Program

Tax Credit Contribution

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Water & Wastewater Loan and Grant Program

Electric Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee Program

Community Connect Grants – Broadband

Broadband Loans and Loan Guarantee

Telecommunications Loans and Loan Guarantee

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)/ State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA)

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

Goal 2: Infrastructure

Maintain, modernize and expand infrastructure to make the region more competitive for community and economic development

Partners and Stakeholders

- MRPC
- Local Governments
- Economic Development Entities
- Developers
- Rural Electric Cooperatives
- Internet Service Providers
- Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
- Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)
- Water/Sewer Districts
- Other Regional Partners



Goal 2: Infrastructure	Maintain, modernize and expand infrastructure to make the region more competitive for community and economic development
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OBJECTIVE 2.1: Maintain awareness of infrastructure needs within the region	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 2.1.1 Encourage communities to set utility rates that consider funding for future improvements 2.1.2 Meet with local officials to develop a full list of specific infrastructure needs to include broadband, water, sewer, etc. by city and county 2.1.3 Work with local governments on asset management utilizing GIS and other tools 2.1.4 Encourage the development of Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) 2.1.5 Share information on funding opportunities including TIF, CID, NID, TDD, bond issues, grants, etc. 2.1.6 Prioritize specific road/bridge and multimodal projects in the region, including addressing the needs of I-44, 63, 50, 21 & 8, Rail and Air	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS: Assist cities to find funding to replace outdated or deteriorated utility lines in need of replacement (i.e. lead lines, clay pipes, etc.)

OBJECTIVE 2.2: Modernize infrastructure to improve the efficiency and reliability, and to enhance economic development and public well-being	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 2.2.1 Improve existing transportation systems to provide updated safety enhancements 2.2.2 Support the development and use of green energy/geothermal 2.2.3 Construct infrastructure updates related to autonomous/electric vehicles, such as EV charging stations 2.2.4 Assist local communities to find funding to diversify their energy supply to include redundancy in backup systems and sustainable sources such as solar, wind, etc. 2.2.5 Encourage entities to incorporate resiliency in the design of infrastructure upgrades 2.2.6 Assist counties in obtaining funding to upgrade water/sewer systems to meet state and federal standards	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Expand the capacity and reach of infrastructure to meet the growing needs of the region	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:	

- 2.3.1 Encourage communities to make improvements to walkability/ADA accessibility
- 2.3.2 Promote the increase of transportation funding in order to address major system improvements
- 2.3.3 Urge internet service providers to seek funding through Missouri’s BEAD program to support the expansion of broadband and the implementation of the Missouri Association of Council of Government’s (MACOG) Reid report
- 2.3.4 Encourage centralized water/sewer systems and regionalization to the extent feasible
- 2.3.5 Provide support to possible port development in the northern part of the region and the accompanying needs for improvements to Highway 19
- 2.3.6 Improve transportation networks, including local freight routes and air to support growth of logistical and distribution industries
- 2.3.7 Support public transit in the region including upgrades and expansion to infrastructure and vehicles that facilitate rural transit options

PERFORMANCE MEASURES:

Broadband Availability, MoDOT Tracker, Number of EV Charging Stations, Utilize <https://www.bts.gov/ctp> to review county transportation profiles for all types of transportation, including rails, ports, bike/ped, etc.

MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

Goal 2:

Infrastructure

FUNDING RESOURCES

Delta Regional Authority

State's Economic Development Assistance Program (SEDAP)

Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF)

Delta Workforce Grant Program

Strategic Planning Program

Workforce Opportunity for Rural Communities (WORC)

U.S. Department of Defense

Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) grants

Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP)

U.S. Economic Development Administration

Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA)

EDA Public Works

MO Department of Economic Development

Brownfield Remediation Program

Chapter 100 Tax Exemptions

Missouri Works

Downtown Preservation

Certified Sites Program

MO Manufacturing Jobs Program

MO Quality Jobs Program

Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

MO Development Finance Board

Single Issue Tax Exempt Industrial Revenue Bonds

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG)

Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG)

Goal 3: Healthy Communities

Promote revitalized, healthy, safe
and resilient communities

Partners and Stakeholders

- MRPC
- Local Governments
- School Districts
- University Extension Offices
- Local Businesses
- Local Banks
- Chambers of Commerce
- County Health Departments
- County Hospitals
- Mental Health Agencies
- Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC)
- Central Workforce Development Board (CWDB)
- Regional Higher Educations Institutions
- Local and State Law Enforcement
- Religious Institutions
- Other Regional Partners



Goal 3: Healthy Communities	Promote revitalized, healthy, safe and resilient communities
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OBJECTIVE 3.1: Build a resilient region that can effectively respond to challenges and capitalize on opportunities, ensuring long-term economic and social prosperity for all residents	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 3.1.1 Encourage redundancy in infrastructure and prioritize improvements with involvement by state/federal agencies 3.1.2 Implement floodplain regulations and adoption of new maps 3.1.3 Identify flood prone areas that impact transportation in the region and maintain a list for improvements 3.1.4 Expand broadband availability to ensure access during major weather events, etc. 3.1.5 Coordinate and share information from hazard mitigation/regional emergency plans and provide planning and technical assistance to implement strategies 3.1.6 Assist non-profits that help underserved communities and/or populations to obtain funding for programs and equipment	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Provide quality, patient-centered healthcare in the region	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 3.2.1 Increase the number of primary healthcare providers ensuring equitable access to quality healthcare services for all residents (including SUD/ODU, women’s health, etc.) 3.2.2 Enhance early intervention strategies in healthcare by implementing comprehensive screening programs and proactive outreach initiatives, resulting in improved detection rates and timely interventions 3.2.3 Advocate to increase funding opportunities to county public health departments to better provide care for Missouri’s most underserved populations 3.2.4 Promote the widespread adoption and utilization of the 988-crisis hotline as the primary access point for mental health and crisis intervention services nationwide, ensuring seamless and immediate support for individuals experiencing mental health crises 3.2.5 Enhance transportation accessibility to mental and medical health facilities, reducing barriers to care and ensuring timely access for all individuals in the Meramec Region 3.2.6 Increase the reach of substance use prevention education programs in schools in the Meramec Region using evidence-based practices. (including Too Good for Drugs, Seeking Safety, etc.) 3.2.7 Secure sustainable funding for opioid-based consortiums to continue collaborative efforts in prevention, treatment and recovery support services	

3.2.8 Develop and implement re-entry programs in county jails aimed at reducing recidivism rates and promoting successful community reintegration for inmates through structured rehabilitation, employment assistance and social support services	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Maintain a physical environment that supports healthy communities	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:	
3.3.1 Update the Ozark Rivers Solid Waste Management District solid waste plan to include programs addressing illegal dumping, the reduction of hard to recycle materials and new waste streams and the expansion of education and awareness programs for recycling, household hazardous waste, composting, waste reduction, etc.	
3.3.2 Secure funding to consider alternate heat sources for homes and improvements to the transportation system to ensure clean air	
3.3.3 Encourage development of eco-friendly alternative energy programs that benefit the region, residents and underserved populations (such as solar, wind)	
3.3.4 Encourage walkable communities and assist with the development and implementation of active transportation plans	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 3.4: Increase access to affordable, high-quality childcare options in the region	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:	
3.4.1 Assess the demand for childcare by identifying areas with shortages and desired program features (e.g., infant care, after-school programs) and identify solutions for filling the gaps	
3.4.2 Encourage businesses to offer on-site childcare or partner with local providers to offer discounted rates for employees	
3.4.3 Partner with educational institutions to offer apprenticeship programs or subsidized certifications to attract new workers and create a pipeline of qualified talent	
3.4.4 Encourage the state to resolve program delivery issues for childcare subsidies to qualifying families and encourage participation	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Increase in number of childcare available spots	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 3.5: Promote place-making within the region	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:	

3.5.1	Educate residents about the link between community maintenance and property values, safety, and overall quality of life
3.5.2	Encourage regional counties and towns to participate in various community betterment programs such as Missouri Main Street program, downtown revitalization programs, demolition/cleanup programs
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	
MRPC ACTION ITEMS:	

OBJECTIVE 3.6: Assist communities and counties with planning activities		TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:		
3.6.1	Encourage local communities to view comprehensive planning as a roadmap for the future by providing a clear vision, goals, and strategies for development	
3.6.2	Collaborate with local communities to promote code enforcement and its benefits for a thriving residential and commercial environment	
3.6.3	Encourage communities to use zoning to make local decisions about their development priorities	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Number of local codes updated; number of property maintenance codes adopted		MRPC ACTION ITEMS: Create clear, concise materials (websites, brochures, presentations) explaining the purpose and benefits of zoning/code enforcement in an easy-to-understand manner

OBJECTIVE 3.7: Promote a coordinated regional approach to address the needs of the unhoused population		TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:		
3.7.1	Advocate for increased funding for programs like HUD's Supportive Housing Programs	
3.7.2	Work with each county's resource providers to equip communities and individuals/families with housing needs	
3.7.3	Encourage communities to prioritize permanent, supportive/transitional housing with on-site or linked social services	
3.7.4	Form a joint taskforce to help reduce homelessness, including other regional Public Housing Administrations (PHAs), US Housing and Urban Development, etc.	
3.7.5	Develop outreach programs specifically targeting older adults at risk of homelessness, including those facing eviction or living in unsafe conditions	
3.7.6	Maintain resource list of service providers	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:		MRPC ACTION ITEMS: Adding preferences for homeless, elderly and disabled applicants into the MRPC PHA's Administrative Plan to accelerate voucher issuance, Consider applying for Foster Youth Initiative Vouchers, Continue to provide county specific

resource guides to housing participants addressing substance/opioid prevention and abuse, Serve on the Rolla Mission's Recovery for those Unhoused Program
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Goal 3:

Healthy Communities

FUNDING RESOURCES

Delta Regional Authority

Delta Region Rural Health Workforce Training Program

Delta Doctors

Delta Region Community Health Systems Development Program

MO Department of Economic Development

Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP)

Youth Opportunities Program (YOP)

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)

MO Department of Natural Resources

Brownfield Remediation Program

Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund

Recreational Trails Program

Land and Water Conservation Fund

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Community Facilities Loan and Grant Program

Delta Healthcare Sewer Grant

Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant

Missouri Foundation for Health

Missouri Humanities Council

U.S. Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA)

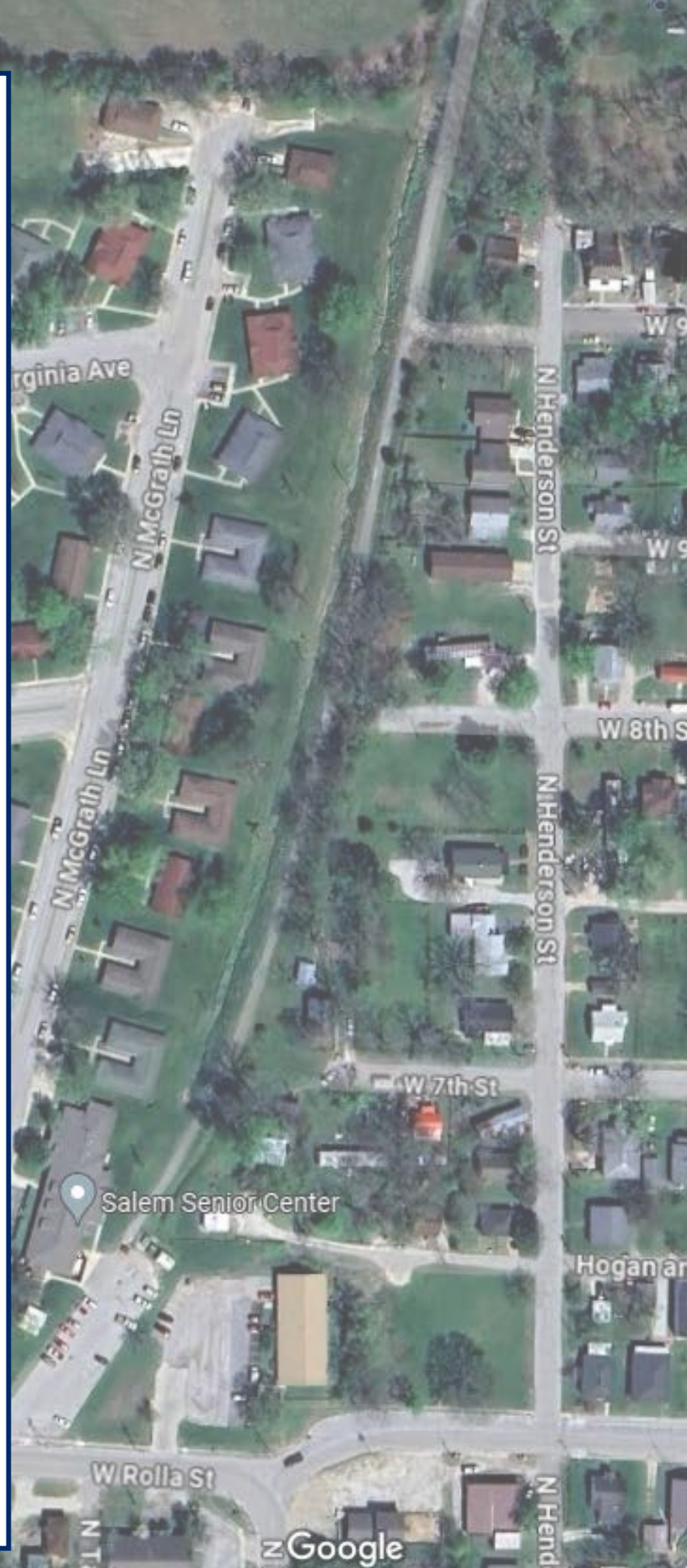
Goal 4:

Housing

Expand and diversify the local housing supply to provide safe, equitable, and affordable housing for all residents of the Meramec Region

Partners and Stakeholders

- MRPC
- Local Governments
- Local Businesses
- Local Banks
- Chambers of Commerce
- Realtors
- Contractors
- Developers
- Economic Development Groups
- Trade Unions
- Other Regional Partners



Goal 4: Housing	Expand and diversify the local housing supply to provide safe, equitable, and affordable housing for all residents of the Meramec Region
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OBJECTIVE 4.1: Engage local stakeholders and refine goals for the regional housing supply	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 4.1.1 Pursue funding for the development of housing studies and implement results of existing/in-process studies around the region 4.1.2 Work with communities on mix of housing/zoning codes, to include supportive local codes for unhoused populations 4.1.3 Host housing forums in each county to identify unique needs of local communities	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Adoption of new zoning codes to support a variety of housing options	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 4.2: Identify funding opportunities for residential infrastructure and the renovation of existing housing	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 4.2.1 Advocate for housing development programs and use of financing tools at the state and federal level 4.2.2 Encourage the use of MO DED-CDBG funds for public infrastructure development for affordable/workforce housing 4.2.3 Utilize a variety of financing tools for the construction of housing (i.e. TIF/NID/CID/Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO), Missouri Housing Development Corporation (MHDC) tax credits, etc.) 4.2.4 Leverage public/private partnerships for housing construction 4.2.5 Coordinate new residential development with the availability and capacity of critical infrastructure	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

OBJECTIVE 4.3: Expand the availability of developable land for residential development	TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES: 4.3.1 Work with communities on the development of growth/annexation plans for new housing developments 4.3.2 Promote CDBG demolition grants and assist communities in the development of writing grants 4.3.3 Encourage the redevelopment of infill sites to provide new residential units within city boundaries	
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:

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OBJECTIVE 4.4: Increase the availability of affordable housing units within the region		TIMELINE:
STRATEGIES:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.4.1 Recognize the need for and encouragement of developers to build workforce housing 4.4.2 Update building and zoning codes to meet evolving community needs 4.4.3 Work with non-profits on the development of affordable housing and upgrading existing affordable housing stock 4.4.4 Recruit more landlords to participate in the region’s HUD program 4.4.5 Encourage the utilization of the first-time homebuyers’ program 4.4.6 Promote the continued use of high school building trades programs 4.4.7 Coordinate partnerships for the construction of affordable and mixed-use senior housing developments 		
PERFORMANCE MEASURES:	MRPC ACTION ITEMS:	

Goal 4:

Housing

FUNDING RESOURCES

Federal Home Loan Bank – Des Moines

Affordable Housing Program

Home Start Program (Down payment/closing costs)

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs

Missouri Housing Development Commission (MHDC)

Low-Income Housing Tax Credits

HOME Housing

Affordable Housing Assistance Program

Missouri Housing Trust Fund

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Housing Preservation Grant

Multi-Family Housing Loans and Loan Guarantees

Multi-Family Housing Preservation and Revitalization

Single-Family Housing Loans

Home Repair Loans and Grants

APPENDICES

2024 CEDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

First Name	Last Name	Representing	Company / Enterprise	Position	County/City
Alexandra	Crabb	Economic Development	Missouri DeD	Regional Engagement Project Manager	
Amy	Wildhaber	Healthcare	Sullivan Hospital	Director Of Operations	Crawford
Angie	Billo	Education	MS&T	Industry Engagement Officer	Phelps
Anita	Ivey	Local Government	City of St. Robert	City Administrator	Pulaski
Ashley	Brooks	Social Assistance	The Rolla Mission	Director	Phelps
Ashley	Campbell	Healthcare	Phelps/Maries County Health Dept.	Director	Phelps
Ashten	Heying	Healthcare	Hermann Area District Hospital	Administrative Assistant	Gasconade
Ben	Tipton	Banking	Phelps County Bank/Phelps CCF	Mortgage Lender	
Bill	Hellebusch	Healthcare	Hermann Area District Hospital	Administrator	Gasconade
Bruce	Cox	Hermann	City of Hermann	Mayor	Gasconade
Carmen	Hartwell	Infrastructure	Gascosage Electric	General Manager	Gasconade
Carol	Carson	Business	Carson Real Estate	Owner	Pulaski
Chris	Bowser	Education	State Tech	Vice President For Student Affairs - State Tech	Osage
Chuck	Ray	Economic Development	Bourbon Economic Development Group	Member	Crawford
Dale	Martin	Economic Development	Rolla Regional Economic Commission	Executive Director	Phelps
Darryl	Griffin	Osage County	Osage County	Presiding Commissioner	Osage
Dawn	Bell	Phelps County	City of Rolla	Community Development Director	Phelps
Dawn	Grosse	Education	Hermann High School	Social Worker	Gasconade
Debby	Bust	Social Assistance	Washington Co Community Partnership	Director	Washington

Devon	Griep	Healthcare	Phelps Health	Director Of Community Health/Equity	Phelps
Donald	Keeney	Housing	MRPC	Manager Of Housing	Phelps
Doug	Potts	Economic Development	City of Waynesville	Economic Development Director	Pulaski
Geoff	Neill	Education	Gasconade County R1	Superintendent	Gasconade
Hilary	Bales	Education	Waynesville R-VI School District	Superintendent	Pulaski
Jaclyn	Rowe	economic development	Potosi/Washington County IDA	Economic Development Director	Washington
Jamie	Myers	Healthcare	Prevention Consultants	Director	
Jan	Haviland	Industry	Haviland Corp.	Owner	Osage
Janet	Walker	Minorities	MO Univ. S&T	Student Program Administrator	Phelps
Jean	Darnell	Social Assistance	Community Partnership	Executive Director	
Jenna	Davis	Economic Development	Keller Williams Realty	Realtor	Phelps
Joey	Auxier	Local Government	Phelps County	Presiding Commissioner	Phelps
John	Casey	Transportation/ Commercial Dev	Casey Real Estate	Owner	Washington
Kari	Lane	Social Assistance	Hope Alliance	Director	
Kellie	Gilbert	Social Assistance	Hermann Families in Action	Member	Gasconade
Kelly	Long	Industry	Paramount Apparel	Human Resources Director	Crawford
Kent	Sherrow	Infrastructure	Steelville Telephone	Marketing Director	Crawford
Amy	Sublett	Workforce Development	Central Workforce Investment Board	Director	
Kim	Sallin	Healthcare	Osage County Health Dept.	RN/ Administrator	Osage
Kraig	Bone	EMS/Law Enforcement	Let's Train	Owner	Washington
Kyle	Dare	Education	Rolla Public Schools	Superintendent	Phelps
Lenice	Basham	Education	Belle School District	Superintendent	Maries
Lonna	Sowers	Economic Development	Rolla Downtown Business	President	Phelps

Lyle	Thomas	Infrastructure	City of St. James	Public Works Director	Phelps
Mark	James	Business	Results Realty and Auction	Realtor	Maries
Marla	Stevenson	Banking	Southern Bank	Commercial Lending	Phelps
Megan	Titus	Higher Education	Lincoln University	Site Coordinator at Fort Leonard Wood	Pulaski
Melissa	Shaw	Housing	Salem Housing	Executive Director	Dent
Mitch	Rademan	Economic Development	Missouri DeD	Regional Manager	
Nathan	Wills	Education	Salem R-80 School District	Assistant Superintendent	Dent
Pat	Leaders	Housing	Century 21	Broker	Phelps
Rich	Eisterhold	Utilities	Three Rivers Electric	Manager Of Mktg and Tech Serv	Osage
Rick	Krawiecki	local govt	City of St. James	Mayor	Phelps
Roger	Louderman	Economic Development	Bourbon Economic Development Group	Member	Crawford
Sally	Burbridge	Economic Development/Local Gov	City of Salem	Director/City Admin	Dent
Sean	Siebert	Economic Dev/Workforce Dev	Invent Yourself LLC	Owner	Crawford
Shane	Anselm	Labor	Carpenter's District Council	Representative	Phelps
Sharon	Hollis	Social Assistance	Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry		Maries
Sherry	Lea	Community Development	Health Dent County	Director	Dent
Stefan	Herron	Economic Development	Missouri DeD	Strategy & Policy Analyst	
Tabitha	Stanfast	EMS/Law Enforcement	Salem Memorial Hospital District	ER Director	Dent
Tammy	Bruckerhoff	Economic Development	City of Hermann	Tourism Director	Gasconade
Taisia	Gordon	Engineering	Archer-Elgin Engineering	Director of Marketing & Client Services	Phelps
Teresa	Messersmith	Education	Maries Co R-1	Superintendent	Maries
Terry	Beckham	Local Government	City of Steelville	Mayor	Crawford
Terry	Hammer	Tourism	Hermann Hill Winery	Owner	Gasconade

Todd	Tracy	Education	East Central College	Executive Director	Phelps
Tony	Floyd	Utilities	Inter-County Electric	Economic Development	Dent
Travis	Bohrer	Education	Dixon School District	Superintendent	Pulaski
Vic	Stratman	Local Government	Maries County	Presiding Commissioner	Maries
Zachary	Moser	Healthcare	Dent County Health Center	Administrator	Dent

2024 MRPC PLANNING COMMITTEE

First Name	Last Name	Representing
T.R.	Dudley	For-Profit Washington County
Richard	Heenan	Rep. for Mayor of Crocker
Joey	Auxier	Pres. Comm. Phelps County
Steve	Black	Pres. Comm. Crawford County
Joseph	Blount	Mayor of Potosi
Dave	Lafferty	Mayor of Bourbon
Earl	Brown	Disabled
Tammy	Bruckerhoff	Tourism
John	Casey	Transportation
Tom	Coots	Rep. for Mayor of Rolla
Dawn	Bell	Rep. for Mayor of Rolla
Nick	Courtois	Chairperson for Mineral Point
Rich	Eisterhold	For-Profit Osage County
Patricia	Heaney	Rep. for Mayor of Hermann
Ivie	Helton	Mayor Pro-Tem of Meta
Anita	Ivey	Rep. for Mayor of St. Robert
Jason	Koenigsfeld	Rep. for Mayor of Morrison
John	Money	Healthcare
Rodney	Neff	Rep. for Mayor of Cuba
Matt	McCarter	Farming/Agri-business
John	Robinson, III	Mayor of Caledonia
Marie	Slusser	Mayor of Chamois
Vic	Stratman	Pres. Comm. Maries County

2024 MRPC BOARD

First Name	Last Name	Title	Representing	City	County
James	Abrahamson		Represents Mayor, Alternate	Crocker	
Shane	Anselm		At-Large, Labor		
Joey	Auxier	Presiding Commissioner			Phelps
Kent	Bagnall		For-Profit		Phelps
Dawn	Bell		Represents Mayor	Rolla	
Steve	Black	Presiding Commissioner			Crawford
Joseph	Blount	Mayor		Potosi	
Margie	Brine		Represents Mayor	Bourbon	
Earl	Brown		At-Large, Disabled		
Tammy	Bruckerhoff		At-Large, Tourism		
John	Butz		Represents Mayor	Rolla	
John	Casey		At-Large, Transportation		
Patti	Chism	Mayor		Newburg	
Donald	Claycomb		At-Large, Education		
Tom	Coots		Represents Mayor, Alternate	Rolla	
Nick	Courtois	Chairperson		Mineral Point	
Colby	Davis	Chairperson		Argyle	
Brenda	Doyle		At-Large, Seniors		
T.R.	Dudley		For-Profit		Washington
Michael	Dunbar		For-Profit		Pulaski
Rich	Eisterhold		For-Profit		Osage
Taisia	Gordon		At-Large, Small Business	Rolla	Phelps
Debbie	Green	Mayor		Gasconade	
Darryl	Griffin	Presiding Commissioner			Osage
Shannon	Grus	Mayor		Rosebud	
Darryl	Haller	Chairperson		Freeburg	
Albert	Hamlet	Mayor		Edgar Springs	
Jan	Haviland		At-Large, Industry		
Patricia	Heaney		Represents Mayor	Hermann	

Richard	Heenan		Represents Mayor, Alternate	Crocker	
Ivie	Helton	Mayor Pro Tem		Meta	
Mary	Heywood		At-Large, Unemployed		
Tai	Kimes		At-Large, Underrepresented		
Jason	Koenigsfeld		Represents Mayor	Morrison	
Duane	Kraettli		For-Profit		Gasconade
Rick	Krawiecki	Mayor		Saint James	
Gary	Larson	Presiding Commissioner			Dent
George	Lauritson	Mayor		Saint Robert	
Erik	Lowes		For-Profit	Crawford	
Dwight	Massey	Mayor		Linn	
Tammy	Massman	Mayor		Westphalia	
Matt	McCarter		At-Large, Agri-Business		Phelps
Kevin	McFadden	Mayor		Owensville	
John	Money		At-Large, Healthcare		
Rodney	Neff		Represents Mayor	Cuba	
Gene	Newkirk	Presiding Commissioner			Pulaski
Mike	Null	Mayor		Dixon	
John	Robinson III	Mayor		Caledonia	
William	Sanfilippo	Mayor		Irondale	
Dave	Sansegraw	Presiding Commissioner			Washington
Timothy	Schell	Mayor		Vienna	
Tim	Schulte	Presiding Commissioner			Gasconade
Ray	Schwartz		For-Profit		Maries
Marie	Slusser	Mayor		Chamois	
John	Smith		For-Profit		Dent
Kory	Maune	Mayor		Doolittle	
Merrilee	Spurgeon	Mayor		Bland	
Vic	Stratman	Presiding Commissioner			Maries
	VACANT		At-Large, Lending Institutions		
Steve	Vogt		Represents Mayor	Belle	

Jason	Ward		Represents Mayor	Steelville	
Kyle	Williams		Represents Mayor	Salem	
Sean	Wilson	Mayor		Waynesville	

ADOPTION OF FINAL CEDS DOCUMENT