

Community Collaboration for Project Development

*Seeking empowerment
and engagement from
project inception*

Metropolitan
ENERGY CENTER



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Our Purpose	3
Our Outreach	4
Our Process	4
Methods	5
Scheduling and How We Communicate.....	5
Community Groups and Their Backgrounds.....	5
Poetry for Personal Power.....	5
MY REGION WINS!	6
CleanAirNow	6
Westside Housing.....	7
The Community Listening Sessions	8
Key Concepts.....	9
Results and Lessons Learned.....	10
Ten Lessons Drawn Directly from Session Discussions.....	10
Takeaways on Community-Preferred Process Integration	14
Discussion and Recommendations	16
Executing the Approach	16
Recommendations for Community Input Gathering	16
Acknowledgement	18
Appendix: Comments on Messaging	19

Introduction

Our Purpose

Staff at Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC) were reporting misunderstandings and other frustrations working with community-based organizations (CBOs). We determined to look at our own processes and take action on improvements identified. We heard CBOs did not feel they were a part of our transportation projects early enough. When their input was solicited, it was in a timeframe that their feedback had a minor impact on the work. This hit us hard, as our intention was not to exclude them in the decision-making process nor from having a true impact on the work. Bringing them on during the latter part of the decision-making process did not do a service for the organizations nor the community members we and they serve.

We undertook this brief study to understand how best to engage community organizations at the beginning of project work, empowering them to define a work scope with us. The intention of this report is to share our findings as guidance to help others around the country productively collaborate with their communities and organizations. By working together with grassroots community organizations, MEC can work to integrate Clean Cities outreach into other on-the-ground efforts. This report documents a flexible approach to community engagement that can be integrated with future project designs. We thank the participants and intend to deepen long-standing relationships with these and other groups to better serve everyone.

The intention of this report is to share our findings as guidance to help others around the country productively collaborate with their communities and organizations.



About MEC

Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC) dedicates effort to creating resource efficiency, environmental health, and economic vitality in the Kansas City region and beyond. Since 1983 we have worked with residents, businesses, and municipalities to transform energy use in the building and transportation sectors — all while raising awareness to improve the air quality for our entire region.



About MEC's Clean Cities Coalitions

Transportation is vital to our society and economy. Through our Kansas City Regional and Central Kansas Clean Cities coalitions, we work to make transportation cleaner and more energy efficient. Supported by the U.S. Department of Energy, our coalitions unite public and private sectors to advance cleaner fuels, fuel efficiency, and new technologies.

Our Outreach

Our initial list included organizations we have worked with in the past, networked with regarding potential opportunities, and/or were listed as a group we would like to connect with. We had a total of 5 local community groups and organizations to reach out as possible participants in this process. Those organizations are:

- *Shirley's Kitchen Cabinet*
- *CleanAirNow*
- *Poetry for Personal Power*
- *Westside Housing Organization*
- *MY REGION WINS! (MRW!)*

CAN, P3, WSH, and MRW! were able to participate in this listening session series. We plan to develop deeper relationships with these and other groups through the implementation of a new community-led approach that is an outcome of this work, described later in this report.

Our Process

Going into this project and the community listening sessions, we knew the work of these organizations is vital to the well-being of the community we all serve, and that their concerns are key concepts that should be integrated and not just “heard” and “valued”. With that said, our goal was to be able to listen to the feedback and conversation to create guidance going forward to help us get the most out of our future partnerships and better service the communities we all work in. We may not always get it right, but we want our intentions to always be clear with those we partner with on current and future projects here at MEC.

Methods

Scheduling and How We Communicate

Leading with those intentions means meeting the community where they are, including understanding that their schedules are busy. We made ourselves completely available for times and dates that would work with their schedules, including offering late evening meetings and weekends. Using a Doodle poll, we were able to find time slots that worked for each organization, and pair the organization on when their available time matched up accordingly. Both sessions were recorded, had a designated note taker, and community organizations responded to an exit survey.

They were held at the following days and times:

Monday, October 11, 2021, 9:00am – 10:45am with P3 & MRW!

Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 8:00pm – 9:45pm with CAN & WSH

Community Groups and Their Backgrounds

Poetry for Personal Power

Poetry for Personal Power is a 501(c)(3) nationally recognized expert on trauma and resilience incorporated and headquartered in Kansas City, MO.

Background: Since 2009, Poetry for Personal Power works to connect people with innovative ways to overcome adversity and to increase artist funding by connecting with the health care sector. Art is an important part of total wellness and vital to building healthier communities. By using the tools of art, advocacy, and social determinant building, P3 can help individuals and communities find their personal power.

Mission: Using art to show that emotional distress is temporary and transformative.

Website: <https://www.poetryforpersonalpower.org/>

Session Representative: Sheri



MY REGION WINS!

MY REGION WINS!, Kansas City's creative 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, uses the Arts to nurture creative, undeveloped ideas that shape society.

Background: MY REGION WINS! assists in the development of concepts; provides coaching, resources, and an environment for people to pursue their aspirational goals and dreams. MRW! also creates projects and programs to address environmental and social injustices and issues.

Mission: To transcend everyday challenges by using the Arts to nurture creative and undeveloped ideas that shape society.

Website: <https://myregionwins.org/mrw>

Session Representative: Carl



CleanAirNow

CleanAirNow is a climate and environmental justice organization dedicated to improving environmental health of those impacted by environmental racism, toxic air pollution and climate change.

Background: CleanAirNow is building community power through environmental health education, equitable community-based research projects, and people-driven solutions in public policy to improve public health.

Mission: The CleanAirNow Coalition is dedicated to improving air quality in Kansas City and the surrounding region, particularly in communities suffering the greatest health burden, and to prevent and mitigate disease caused by air pollution.

Website: <http://cankc.org/>

Session Representative: Beto



Westside Housing

Westside Housing Organization, Inc. is a private, not-for-profit corporation founded in 1973 by neighborhood residents who wanted the City to improve the physical conditions of their neighborhood and save houses from being torn down for highway construction. Today, Westside Housing Organization is one of the oldest and most respected community development corporations (CDC) in the Kansas City, Missouri region.

Background: Westside Housing works at the Intersection of home, health, energy, and equity.

Mission: Westside Housing's mission is to build robust sustainable communities. Westside Housing engages residents, local businesses, and key stakeholders to rebuild neighborhoods so they are safe, affordable, and healthy places where diverse people want to live, work and play. Westside Housing demonstrates the principles of sustainability in all lines of business and the communities they serve.

Website: <http://westsidehousing.org/>

Session Representative: Warren



The Community Listening Sessions

Session 1

Monday, October 11, 2021, 9:00am – 10:45am with P3 & MRW!

- Community Organization Meetings: Depends on the group and it rotates from large group settings to 1:1 setting.
- Rate at which you meet: Both groups meet at minimum monthly with their community members, donors, and their board members on items that affect them.
- Communication: Both groups communicate through social media, email, newsletter, phone calls, webinar, and regular 1:1 communication through a coffee meet up.
- Accessibility: Community members can access them and the work they do both virtually and in-person. Both stressed the importance of being accessible.
- When would you like to be engaged in an MEC project concept: At the very beginning and throughout this process from project planning, design, and implementation. They would like to be included at all stages of a project they are working on.
- What does that look like to you: A call, email, and notification earlier rather than later.
- What prohibits you from doing your work: Funding, money, opportunities, and resources for both.
- Ideal lead time: Before the project and idea is finalized - Let us see it in its preliminary stages.
- Additional Feedback: Public acknowledgement, support, and an uplifting of them desired from MEC
- Last remarks: Thankful for the stipends and requested additional information on stipend.

Session 2

Tuesday, October 12, 2021, 8:00pm – 9:45pm with CAN & WSH

- Community Organization Meetings: Both meet with clients, board, and community members on a regular basis.
- Rate at which you meet: Weekly, monthly; it just depends for both organizations.
- Communication: In-person and recently, virtual because of COVID.
- Accessibility: Both organizations make it easy to access them, because they want to be available to their community/constituents.
- When would you like to be engaged in an MEC project concept: Both want to see a bottom-up approach (one that emphasizes decisions coming from the community), not a top-down approach. Both stated the need for the community to be centered throughout this process, so that means creating long standing relationships. This included the beginning, end, and implementation of a project they are a part of.
- What does that look like to you: Let us know from the very beginning what you are working on, but that can only come from trust and communication.
- What prohibits you from doing your work: Funding staff, and over-commitment when taking on additional tasks.
- Ideal lead time: Their work is multifaceted, and the communication/lead time should reflect that. The earlier the better. Both stressed the simple task of constant communication on all items.
- Additional Feedback: None
- Last remarks: Do not come into communities and just extract information, and do not leave the community behind as your projects continue to grow.

Key Concepts

Before starting any project, especially one that we anticipate will impact a community (positively or negatively), we commit to using the following three key concepts to engage impacted community members directly. As experts and organizations doing the work, we want to align our effort with the best practices they have learned while doing work in the Kansas City community.

The key concepts are followed by lessons learned during our listening sessions and quotes from participants that illustrate the importance and impact of those ideas.

- **Listen to the People:** It's important for us to understand that those in their community know what's best for it. Moreover, we understand that it is important for us to listen to the needs, concerns, and questions of those we serve here in the Kansas City region. We have learned the importance of not taking up space and have the role of an active listener to those we continue to serve here in our community.
- **Center on the People:** We, as well as the community groups and organizations here in the Kansas City region, have the obligation to center those most impacted here in our community throughout all our processes. We have learned the importance of centering those who are at the frontlines of climate change and showing up to be active advocates of those needs as well. We look forward to actively working in the community as a collective when we center those most impacted throughout our work in the Kansas City region.
- **Empower the People:** Through listening and centering those most impacted throughout our work, we can empower the many communities we serve here in the Kansas City region. The goal is to cultivate an environment that allows for equal representation by all involved. Once that is established, that representation deserves the opportunity to speak, ability to enact, tools to thrive, and the power to continue their mission. When all organizations are given this ability organically, as a function of the environment, projects will work more harmoniously and productively.

Results and Lessons Learned

Ten Lessons Drawn from Session Discussions

Lesson 1

The work these groups do is personally important to them.

Session 1

“Here is our vision, and we want you, MEC and others, involved [to sponsor it (not fill out a grant rather give us the money)]. We want to get our neighbors and community to be involved, and that would be very nice.” (Carl)

Session 2

“All board members are born and raised in that community, so they know first-hand the issues, so they are able to be a part of the discussion in a way that is meaningful to them.” (Beto)

Lesson 2

Take note of what kinds of projects the groups would want to attempt down the road.

Session 1

“Having a community liaison, someone who is of the community is really important. Having that connection is how you take note of what’s going on and their project.” (Sheri)

Session 2

“Zero emissions and infrastructure can take time but if the will is there, they [funders] can put it in vulnerable communities. Activists have been advocating for zero emission from wherever possible because of the impacts of pollution.” (Beto)

Lesson 3

The more lead time and engagement for community partners, the better.

Session 1

“If you have a project that you’re wanting to come to us and you want us to be involved in, organizationally there has to be respect there. This organization is already up running and having their own programming.



Growing Payoff Expectations

Even though the process of engaging in deep discussion can be emotionally harrowing, with successful engaged discussion, potential grows for effective programs.

There is a respect there with regards to timing and I can't stress that enough. If you're thinking this thing in the beginning phases and when you finally figure out you need these people, contact these people!" (Sheri)

Session 2

"Depending on the complexity of the project, if it was something fairly simple [it could be done quickly]. Other projects take more investment and those would take a lot more time." (Warren)

Lesson 4

Due to past partnerships, some come into future partnerships jaded and the responsibility lies with us to understand that and continue to gain their trust.

Session 1

"The other part is hospitality. How am I treated when I'm with you? Everything doesn't necessarily require a meal, but you know, it's the treatment. Do I feel like you are actually listening to me, do I feel like you will actually listen to me? That's the risk of going into neighborhoods, especially those who are traditionally underserved. You may come in with the best intentions and people will look at you sideways because they are used to not being heard and used to not being listened to." (Sheri)

Session 1

"MEC may not have done anything wrong but you are looking to engage with those who have been taken advantage of by those that look like you." (Carl)

Session 2

"MEC needs to understand their partners well enough to know where they're heading and where are the opportunities for the two organizations can team up. That's why Westside Housing is a good fit on the buildings side of MEC. Transportation is more of a stretch." (Warren)

Lesson 5

Trust and active communication need to be established well before any working relationship can start.

Session 1

"Timing, we want to be at the table to contribute ideas even before the request for proposal is released." (Sheri)

Session 2

"For every person that we collaborate, intern at the university, we have this MOU you are not going to come here to extract and collect data and write up something with no benefit to the community. And whoever is on the ground is part of that academia or academic publication. That we use this for the benefit of our community. We see it time and time again, they're over in their ivory tower in their university and the community is left behind. It needs to be an equitable process. This is besides the grant, the funding. This is that relationship that we need to build. These academics need to be in the community and so they are included in meetings, building trust." (Beto)

Lesson 6

Community organizations are experts in the communities they serve.

Session 1

"The people who are experts in their community, you honestly need them." (Sheri)

Session 1

"Community organizations are assets. Community organizations are influencers. Because community organizations are identified as 'experts' they should be compensated. The compensation validates their 'expertise' which will encourage other people." (Carl)

Session 2

"You want to respect the expertise of the people you are talking to in the community" (Beto)

Lesson 7

All these groups want to diversify what they do and who they partner with.

Session 1

"When we come into the project, kind of establish mutual goals and objectives so that everyone is completely invested. It's one thing to be invested into the community, it's another thing to really clearly see the outline of the goals and objectives. I think that makes something successful while also having multiple ways for people to communicate." (Sheri)

Session 2

"Ideally MEC would be partnering with us on something that is already one of our goals and is in line with our mission. We have had opportunities for funding, but it would require that we be doing something entirely different. And it wouldn't make sense. And we would lose our focus of what we want to do." (Warren)

Lesson 8

Actively look for ways to plug in and engage our partners across all the work we do.

Session 1

"You just justified what we were doing, you seen what I was doing, you seen the greatness. If we ran a 100-yard dash right now under ten seconds, nobody would be applying for nothing, we'd be sought after. When MEC sees entities doing something that is good, something that can benefit from funds." (Carl)

Session 2

"Our work is multifaceted, civic engagement, environmental health and research, community led research, school education in science, advocacy. So, we're at the core of all the issues our community members are dealing with." (Beto)

Lesson 9

Include community groups and organizations in funding opportunities that empower effective local projects.

Session 1

“While money is a necessity, it doesn’t mean people can be bought. The money is a sign of respect, that you respect my time, my knowledge, and my candor.” (Sheri)

Session 2

“A community health worker said that project that you are working on, it is so cool to see, not just a PowerPoint but telling us what is wrong and what we are doing. And now you are engaging us and now we are seeing outcomes and seeing our project being a part of their general plan and action plans are being developed by the community.” (Beto)

Lesson 10

It is possible for all to come away feeling refreshed, heard, and excited about future partnerships.

Session 1

“The listening session itself is good, the determination of what it is good for will come at the end of the engagement process. The information that you’re getting from us is honestly information all entities should have when coming to our community when they’re wanting to work with people in any capacity. The information you’re asking for is the building block of agencies and people working together.” (Sheri)

Session 2

“I enjoyed spending the evening with you, it was a great conversation.” (Beto)

Session 2

“The process overall is really a change in model from what our culture has done for poorer communities” (Warren)

Takeaways on Community-Preferred Process Integration

First Things First: A zero-extraction policy builds trust.

When approaching a community organization to engage in a project, it must be done with a genuine and flexible approach. If you have not had consistent communication with an organization, do not assume they are going to do any favors. Organizations do not necessarily trust unfamiliar project organizers coming in.

A notable example was discussed in the listening session: “On the east side of the city, their community has been studied over and over again by urban studies and sociologists from UMKC, and the community rarely got anything out of it. It was more like an extractive model of studying, where the academics came in, got the information, and left, and then wrote a paper and then hoped to advance to professorship. The community never saw the result. There wasn’t a way that it fed back to the community, and I’m much more in favor of a model of immediate compensation but also in terms of the learnings of the project. So that they are fed back into the community, showing it’s a collaboration rather than an extraction of the lessons of the community.”

Trust is so much a factor in one of the organizations that they have a standard memorandum of understanding (MOU): “For every person that we collaborate, intern to the university, we have this MOU: you are not going to come here to extract and collect data and write up something with no benefit to the community. And whoever is on the ground [sharing information] is part of that academia or academic publication. We use this for the benefit of our community. We see it time and time again, they’re over in their ivory tower in their university and the community is left behind. It needs to be an equitable process. This is besides the grant, the funding. This is that relationship that we need to build. These academics need to be in the community and so they are included in meetings, speaking Spanish, in order to build trust in their communities.”

Process Adjustments: Approach and engage early on.

Engagement of the community is required to assess needs before determining your project purpose. Involve community organizations one to two months before an application or grant opportunity is due. Incorporating everyone’s ideas in project design will result in collaboration and trust. Organizations are already doing their own thing. If they join a project, they will need to figure out where the time, money and resources are coming from. Forming partnerships is always the best at the beginning of a project.

As one organization said, “If MEC is comfortable with creating a collaborative relationship when things are messy, then we sit down... and hash out what needs to be done. That’s what friends do. A relationship based on trust doesn’t require perfection, it just requires engagement.”

Earnest Listening: Let the organizations do the talking.

Although you may have a certain idea on how a community organization will integrate into a project, it is best to keep a neutral tone when explaining the project, rather than telling them how you think they will fit in. Instead, explain the project to them factually. Organizations will tell you if the goals are of interest and are good for their communities. They know what their communities want and need, so it is best to hear them as experts, and take in their views on how they can help.

Long-term Relationships: Work to keep organizations at the table.

Identifying community organizations is key for any project, but it is important that once organizations are at

the table they stay at the table. How are you going to shape a project to meet community needs if decisions are already pre-made and the community members aren't a part of the decision-making process? Also, having a seat at the table does not mean much if it is just for optics. Community organizations far too many times have been used as a check-the-box organization. Having an equitable voice at the table means so much more. Envision that equality is all of us at the table: that includes voice, resources, decision-making. One organization commented on the difficulty of it all:

"If MEC...wants to develop partnerships with grassroots organizations and specifically of color, they have to figure out how to balance the structure between the funders...with the communities – to structure things with their self-interest but certainly don't have the sway or the money ... You want to be able to speak to those larger funders as an organization that is in close touch with grassroots organizations. As opposed to speaking to the communities as an organization that has a funding grant or funding stream that is designed for you by much larger structures. It's all about who's shaping whom."

Deal Breakers: Work to keep transparency and inclusivity.

Transparency goes a long way. Transparency gains trust within the community, but that trust can be broken very easily. Even if the project is not solidified, knowing that you are cultivating an inclusive partnership from the start exemplifies a sign of trust. Inclusivity needs to be a priority throughout the project. Organizations want to be involved in the process and the results. Being able to gather information and data is a priority to distribute to their communities. Any communication that happens beyond the people at the table needs to be distributed to community organizations at the time of that conversation. This allows them to prepare their community. Furthermore, any recognition that the project gets, project (including community) partners should be included. The project administrator (e.g. MEC) should avoid accepting recognition as a standalone agency but should make sure to clearly state the work that the partners have done and accomplished within their communities. As one organization simply said, "Public acknowledgment is empowering."

Community Liaisons: Let community orgs hold the megaphone.

Understand that community organizations may want to serve as community liaisons. It may be in the best interest to leverage the existing relationship you have with community organizations to present ideas to the community. When you can present to community members a united front, it shows community members that these organizations are building something together and will help with future goals.

On Compensation: Time is money, but money implies respect.

The ability to take on a project encompasses many things, including mission alignment, organizational values, time, availability, and money. If a community organization is to be involved, understand that money is not the most important contributing factor. As one organization said, "While money is a necessity, it doesn't mean people can be bought. The money is a sign of respect, that you respect my time, my knowledge, and my candor." Another stated, "Either invest in our dream or go ahead and compensate but realize that everyone has value on the ground."

Discussion and Recommendations

Executing the Approach

The goal of this report is to develop a comprehensive approach on how to productively work with community organizations on future projects. This was curated by listening to the input that our community organizations provided. After the approach was written, the report went right back to the organizations for their additional input. There were no significant changes submitted from the original report, which signified that the approach was agreeable. Nevertheless, a theoretical approach to a real-world application lends itself to question its practicality. Therefore, we determined the next course of action should be to execute the theoretical approach laid out.

Once the listening sessions were completed, the community organizations were tasked with one final outcome: work with our organization to come up with key electric vehicle messaging (see Appendix). The topic was chosen due to the wide spectrum of understanding of the topic within the organizations – some knew very little about EVs while others' focus was EVs (see Appendix). The topic considered was intentional: when it comes to electric vehicles, different talking points resonate with individuals. The point of the topic was to determine what resonates best with their organizations. On a more relevant level, the point of the exercise was to see if the determined approach worked regardless of level of knowledge and interest.

The approach to all the organizations started off similarly: Each organization was given the topic of interest. We believed there could be mutual interest and determining the best way to reach their audience was relevant to our mission and we hope to theirs as well. Communication was left entirely up to the organizations and each one chose a different path. Some organizations had availability while others did not. Being amenable, especially because we reached out to them, is critical in laying the groundwork for a more productive relationship. Timing was kept open-minded. Even if the idea didn't necessarily fall in their specific realm, time would be compensated for their efforts to work together on collaboration.

Recommendations for Community Input Gathering

- Allotting enough time for project completion is incredibly important. It was iterated earlier in the report, but smaller organizations may not have the resources, time, or money. Expecting a quick turnaround may not be possible. This makes it even more imperative to bring up potential projects with community projects as soon as possible. It allows organizations to fit potential projects into their already difficult and hectic work schedules.
- Don't expect your organizational goals to be the priority. Even though your project may be a priority for your organization, it may not be as high up on the priority list for other organizations you're working with.

- Lift up the organization with the resources and connections of your organization. MEC's initial aim may have been to lift up their voices, but this process revealed that the realm of that intent can be far more encompassing.
 - You could follow the community organization on social media and like/retweet/heart their posts. But going one step further by promoting their mission and their events with a post of your own/ incorporating it into a newsletter is even more impactful. By setting the precedent, it will entice other organizations to participate and reciprocate.
 - Oftentimes in media, an organization will spotlight an entity that has given them a donation or financial support. It appeals to your stakeholders that you aren't just willing to spotlight someone that gives you money. Rather, it appeals to your stakeholders that you're lifting up other organizations within your community.
- Be cautious of using theoretical promises where benefits may not reach the intended targets. Make sure all participants are aware of each goal and their expected outcomes. However, it is important to be clear that expected outcomes may not necessarily meet every organization's goal, even if the intent was to do so.

MEC wanted to take a deeper look into ways we can collaborate with local community groups and organizations in the Kansas City region. After having listening sessions with four community groups, we converted their feedback into guidelines we can follow when it comes to teaming up with our current and future partners. We intend for this approach to guide us and others in creating and maintaining long-standing relationships with community partners.

Acknowledgement

We thank CleanAirNow, Poetry for Personal Power, Westside Housing Organization and MY REGION WINS! for their participation. As an organization, we understand that we have a long way to go, and we will continue to look for opportunities to learn and grow with these and other organizations.

Those involved in this process are energized to work together to achieve meaningful outcomes where our missions intersect. The information in this report encapsulates the way to work with community organizations moving forward, for both our organization and yours. As one of the organizations stated, "The information that you're getting from us is honestly information all entities should have when coming to our community when they're wanting to work with people in any capacity. The information you're asking for is the building block of agencies and people working together."

It is up to us to effectively work with our communities and neighbors. We are committed to moving forward in our work through listening, centering, and empowering our community members. With these three pillars of community outreach, we feel we can move as a collective to ensure we are uplifting all those who call the Kansas City region home and ensure that communities across the nation can make truly impactful changes.

This report was developed based upon funding from the Alliance for Sustainable Energy, LLC, Managing and Operating Contractor for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory for the U.S. Department of Energy.

Appendix: Comments on Messaging

Key EV messaging

CleanAir Now

How do you get people to want to change their mode of transportation?

- Change their perception on it's something only for the rich.
 - Talk about TCO is lower in some cases
- Health Benefits
- Community Engagement
 - When going into a community, any community, people who are advocating need to look and act like members of that community.
 - This, whether we like it or not, comes off as more authentic.
 - How do we continually advocate for something when we, the advocates, aren't doing it ourselves.
 - Doesn't matter how we do it, ownership, lease, rideshare programs, but people that are advocating for this need to be driving EVs
- Continued Education
- Local Impacts and issues
- Tangible Targets
 - Hold people more accountable
- Talk about local, state legislation and how it will impact the community
 - Gov officials need to be accessible and open-minded to the needs of their constituents
- Be cautious of using theoretical promises where benefits may not reach the intended customers
 - Stabilizing the grid- are consumers really going to reap the benefit?
 - Just another long list of promises that the community never sees (See below)

MY REGION WINS!

- Can MEC contact the Kansas City Public District (and other school districts) and invite a class to come tour the demo house?
 - Instead of MEC going to their environment (the class) bring them to MEC's
 - When MEC wants to visit a school, have the school allow only those students interested in learning about energy. This way there want be those there who were forced.
- Is there an Associate's Degree that a local college gives out that aligns with MEC's mission? MEC could contribute a \$500 (or whatever MEC can offered) yearly 'scholarship award' to a graduating high school senior going to study in the energy field.
- It's Black History Month. MEC to share stories on Black people whose work in energy has moved

humanity forward and Women's month is March; sharing stories of Women whose work in energy has moved humanity forward would be empowering and people who are empowered more engaged, willing to listen, and carry out action steps.

- Lastly, have you seen [The Iron District](#)? MRW! would like to obtain a few shipping containers and do something like that in the B1-1 business zone [BOON AREA 1](#) is at; obtaining the vacant lots at 3405 E 72nd St (owned by [Housing Authority of KC MO](#)) and 3407 E 72nd St (owned by [Land Bank of Kansas City](#)) would need to happen, then acquiring the shipping containers and having them converted. Next find local entrepreneurs who would like to rent out these shipping containers. Now MEC is helping revive a blighted business zone, supporting local entrepreneurs and getting MEC's message out. Placing two EV charging stations would fit in with no problems. And if a problem from the neighborhood did come up it would be MRW!'s responsibility to tend to it.

Poetry for Personal Power

- How can people afford EVs? Especially Low Income Families
- Often times people are thinking about the now and not the future, so future considerations may not be appealing, especially for those with disabilities
- Need to talk about benefits
 - Real life examples between emissions of cars and asthma (or other correlating diseases)
 - Environmental
 - Even if it's not EVs, what can people do to make an impact now
- There's a disconnect financially, so you have to hammer home incentives.
 - Federal incentives
 - Potentially state and utility (charging) incentives as well
- Depreciation is not as significant as gas cars
- People hear EVs and immediately think, they aren't for me
- Talk about varying prices for cars these days. Some EV models are now less than \$30,000 and that's without any incentives.

Westside Housing Organization

- When speaking with the blue-collar urban core, focus on:
- Alleviating range anxiety
- Total cost relative to gasoline-powered vehicles
- Ride and Drives are a successful form of motivation for people considering EVs. They work well to satisfy curiosity without necessitating costs.
- Demonstrate quietness
- Give a sense on how they would handle
- Acceleration concerns
- Fast and Fun
- No Emissions
- Pitch needs to change if you're talking to people who rent vs people who have bought. There is still a need for EVSE equity in KC despite what MEC is working on currently.
- People don't pay for gas stations and people aren't going to want to pay for EVSE either. So utilities and others need to step in and cover the costs of EVSE as they will be direct beneficiaries.
- As a property manager, I would be happy to advertise EVSE if it was installed for us.

- Working class and poor are just as likely to be intrigued with a new technology as the middle class, but they have fewer opportunities to adopt it. Hone in on adoption opportunities in an equitable way.

Environmental Justice Thoughts

CleanAir Now

- Funding typically does not prioritize Environmental Justice (EJ).
 - The people most impacted by environmental benefits are never the ones who actually receive the benefits.
 - EV adoption is primarily focused on wealthier families.
 - EV adoption needs to be equitable
 - Furthermore, infrastructure is inequitably prioritized
 - Charging on the MO side is in affluent areas. The distribution of charging is very intentional.
- Funding streams have to be transparent to the communities they're supposed to serve.
 - Funding all too often is supposed to go to underserved areas with the promise of tangible benefits, and then the community never sees it.
 - Must find a way to tangibly show the positive effects of funding streams for EVs and EVSE and bring the resources to the community.
 - It is far more likely that a community care when you can exemplify the benefits to them in a simple and clear way.
 - Think of public scenarios that can already be doing this. ZEV buses comes to mind.
 - What can this bus do for me and my community
 - This also brings into consideration the accessibility of EVs in the community